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Items on the June agenda drew dozens of civic leaders and the general public to the June 26 meeting, filling the Metro Board Room to capacity as well as adjacent overflow areas. *Photo by Gayle Anderson*

Board Moves Forward on Half-Cent Sales Tax, Shifts LRTP Consideration Until November

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By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 1, 2008) After hearing dozens of public speakers share their vision of Los Angeles County's transportation future, the Metro Board took three steps at its June 26 meeting that will shape that future.

The Board approved:

- Drafting an ordinance increasing the transportation sales tax in Los Angeles County by one-half cent, which, if approved by voters, would provide a new funding source for Metro
- Holding over until November consideration of the Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan

- Adopting the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Canoga Transportation Corridor of the Metro Orange Line, giving shape to the project.

Item 5, Milestone for Canoga Transportation Corridor.

By selecting the LPA for the four-mile project, the Board allowed creation of the Final Environmental Impact Report and start of preliminary engineering.

The LPA extends the Orange Line on Metro rail right-of-way from the existing Canoga park-and-ride lot to the Chatsworth Metrolink station. The project will include new station platforms at:

- Canoga park-and-ride
- Sherman Way (also with a park-and-ride)
- Roscoe
- Nordoff
- Chatsworth Metrolink Station

The project will also include a bikeway and greenway.

Item 6, Congestion Mitigation Fee Feasibility Report.

The Board carried over approval of the final draft of the Congestion Mitigation Fee Feasibility Study Report. This item would have also authorized staff members to begin project selection, estimate project costs and confirm population growth forecasts.

Item 9, Agreement on Expo Project Funding.

The Board authorized an agreement with the City of Los Angeles for a \$35 million contribution for Phase I of the Expo Line light rail project.

The Financial Contribution Agreement would help satisfy a funding requirement the Board established for Phase I of the project. Under the agreement, the City would be expected to provide its \$35 million share through Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

The Board has adopted an \$862.3 million funding plan for Phase I of the Expo Line.

Item 10, Orange Line Residential Development.

The Board carried over consideration of an agreement with JPI West to develop a residential project on the Metro Orange Line Sepulveda Station park-and-ride site.

As proposed, the project, to be built on 12.5 acres, would include 560 rental units, including 20 town homes along Erwin Street and 10 live-work units on the site's southeastern side. Retail space is proposed on the ground floor of two five-story residential buildings adjacent to the station.

Item 18, Additional Ten Transit Operations Supervisors.

Approving recommendations from the Finance and Budget and Operations

committees, the Board added ten transit operations supervisors to the Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

Item 24 and 25, Positions on Current Legislation.

The Board took positions on a number of pieces of state legislation and one bill in the House of Representatives.

SB 1646 – Approved a “support” position on SB 1646 (Padilla), which would indefinitely extend the \$1 vehicle license fee surcharge for air pollution.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District has imposed the fee on the renewal of registration for any motor vehicle in the district (portions of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties).

Proceeds from the fee, currently generating \$12 million annually, are used for pollution reduction programs. The current license fee surcharge will end on Jan. 1, 2010.

SB 1221 – Approved a “support” position on SB 1221 (Ma) to modify an existing law on Transit Village Development Districts. If the legislation is approved, it would allow a city or county to create a transit village development district within a half-mile radius of a transit station; current law allows only a one-quarter mile radius.

SB 2705 – Approved a “support” position on SB 2705 (Jones). The legislation would allow public transit services to be financed under the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982.

Mello-Roos allows local agencies to create “community facilities districts” and impose special taxes in that district for public works projects.

SB 3021 – Approved a “support” position on SB 3021 (Nava), which would establish the California Transportation Financing Authority (CTFA). Chaired by the State Treasurer, CTFA would issue or approve the issuing of bonds and would facilitate construction projects.

It would also give local agencies the authority to implement tolling projects.

CTFA bonds would be backed by revenue from transportation funds and toll revenues. Bonds would be used to construct improvements and increased capacity for the state transportation system.

HR 6002 – Approved an “oppose” position on HR 6002 (Miller). This federal legislation would prohibit charging a toll on high occupancy vehicles that were allowed to use high occupancy vehicle facilities before December 31, 2007.

Item 37, Transit Database Upgrade.

The Board authorized the CEO to commit \$234,347 to upgrade the Transit Database (TDB), the central repository for the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS), allowing the latest staffing schedule to be available online. Metro’s M3 maintenance system uses information from the TDB to resolve maintenance issues in real time.

The new system will allow system redundancy and increased storage capacity, as well as offer simultaneous operations reporting.

Item 39, Brake System Overhaul.

The Board carried over authorizing the CEO to award a fixed-price unit rate contract for overhaul of the P2000 light rail vehicle—in its seventh year of operation—part of regular maintenance for the light rail vehicle (LRV) fleet.

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Chip Hazen, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance administrator, explains the importance of the wheelchair ramp being deployed at the proper angle, 8.33 percent or lower. He demonstrates that a higher angle could cause a wheelchair to tip over. North Los Angeles Division 3 Bus Operator Quaneika Franklin listens in. *Photo by Ned Racine*

New Online Form Offers Riders With Disabilities Chance to Comment and Commend

By Sarah Winfrey

(July 1, 2008) Metro bus riders with disabilities will soon be able to comment on Metro service online, as well as commend operators who provide superior service for riders with disabilities.

"We will use this [information] to determine what issues there are and get a snapshot of what is happening on the system," says Chip Hazen, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance administrator. "We also want to find operators who should be receiving commendations for going above and beyond what is required."

To do that, Hazen and John Downey, Information Management software engineer, have created a Metro Bus Rider's Evaluation Form for the Web, allowing users to easily share their observations of riding Metro bus lines.

"If they ride a line once a day or for five days, they can report on each time they ride," Hazen says.

"We tried to make this as easy as possible," Hazen says about the online feedback process. "I think we went through about 20 versions before this final one."

Still in the testing phase, this form will only be available to participants

who are trained by Hazen in state law requirements for ADA compliance. He hopes to eliminate any misunderstanding over what the law says and what service riders expect to receive when riding fixed route transportation services, Hazen explains.

For example, some riders believe an operator must force those sitting in priority seating reserved for seniors or persons with disabilities to move if they are not a senior or disabled. The operator is only required to make the request, however, not enforce it.

Each rider using the form will receive a password from Metro. Then all they do is click "submit" to send their comments directly to Metro.

Currently, there are three Metro riders testing the online form. All are considered legally blind, and two participants are completely blind. Additional participants will be drawn from regular Metro riders within the disabled community.

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Metro prohibits using a cell phone while operating an agency vehicle, whether that vehicle carries the public or is one of the hundreds of support vehicles, including pool vehicles.

Photo: National Alliance for the Advancement of Prevention Initiatives

For Metro's Drivers, Talk May Not Be Cheap

- New cell phone law specifies a \$20 fine; second fine is \$50

By Ned Racine, Editor



(July 1, 2008) California's new cell phone law, taking effect today, specifies a \$20 fine for someone driving while using a hand-held cellular phone. The fine for a second citation rises to \$50.

But for a Metro employee involved in an accident while using a hand-held cell phone, the cost for the driver and the agency may be much greater.

Of course, agency rules already prohibit using a cell phone while operating an agency vehicle, whether that vehicle carries the public or is one of the hundreds of support vehicles (including pool vehicles). The agency introduced these rules three years ago, as did transit agencies across the nation.

And for bus and train operators, using any cell phone while operating a moving transit vehicle violates the California Vehicle Code.

"It's definitely a safety issue, and for bus and train operations, it's obviously a public safety issue," said Jack Eckles, DEO, System Safety & Security. He reminded Metro drivers that the new law is "primary enforcement," meaning someone can be stopped by law enforcement officers just for speaking on a hand-held phone.

A more expensive issue for Metro and its employees occurs if they are involved in an accident. Being cited for breaking the cell phone law may make it more difficult to prove the other party is at fault. In fact, a driver may be charged with negligence and face an additional criminal penalty.

If you are sued by the person you hit, your cell phone violation might put you automatically at fault, Eckles explained. And, because Metro is seen as a deep-pockets defendant, the agency might be put at financial risk as

well.

"I was pleased to see the law come into effect because we're so technologically dependent," Eckles said. "We're in constant communication, particularly as an agency. Being that dependent also creates a greater risk of greater distraction. So I think this law is a good balance—to allow people to utilize technology but balance that with public safety."

The problem with cell phones in all their configurations—Blackberrys included—is the distraction caused by dialing," Eckles stressed. "If you're looking at buttons to try to dial, you're just as much at risk whether you're using hands-free or hand-held phones."

"Even speed dialing is still dialing," he added. "You still have that moment when you have to take your eyes off of what you're doing to see your keypad."

Eckles has some advice for the busy Metro driver: "Think first about your environment and what you're doing before you decide to take that message or take that call or send that call. We have gotten so involved with these devices, we have allowed them to become insistent."

Fortunately, Eckles believes the accidents caused by Metro drivers using cell phones have been minor. "But that may say something about either the luck or skill of the operator involved." He wants Metro employees to consider the potential for damage and injuries that large revenue and non-revenue vehicles present.

He hears the same excuses from drivers who were involved in accidents while on their mobile devices:

- Out-and-out denial
- I had an emergency call
- I had to call this person

Eckles recalled an employee poised to make a left-hand turn. The employee saw the light turn green, but there was a car before him, also waiting to turn left. He used the spare seconds to text message. When he was done texting, he hit the accelerator. Boom! The car before his had not yet turned.

"It was like, 'I'm done texting. Let's go,' " Eckles said.

"Still, I'm impressed that, with the amount of vehicles and the amount of passengers we carry, I firmly believe that the vast majority of our employees are extremely responsible," Eckles added.

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Images taken from the closed circuit television system on the Green Line lead to an arrest.

Green Line Cameras Catch a Bold Metro Tagger

Report from Green Line operator leads to arrest

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 1, 2008) The \$3,500 in damages 19-year-old tagger "Tanke" (sometimes "Tank") is suspected of causing on the Green Line doesn't rank high on the list of tagging damage, but his boldness caught Metro's attention.

Most who tag Metro's system avoid the closed circuit television cameras installed on the rail system. "Tanke" didn't. So when a Green Line train operator saw him tagging the inside of a coach, Rail Operations Control searched video footage and snagged his photo.

Green Line Rail Transportation Manager Michael Moore then took that information to Transit Services Bureau (TSB) officials and asked them to investigate the suspected tagger.



Damage to the operator window totaled \$3,500.

"He tagged the operator's window really badly – he went to town on that window," Moore said. "But it's not just Metro. He's left his mark on private property and on other public places. He got a billboard off the 710 [Long Beach] freeway . . . and you know that company might want some restitution, just as we do."

TSB Lt. Jenny Bethune said that the Sheriff's deputies were interested in arresting "Tanke" because he had so wantonly desecrated Metro property in broad daylight.

"It's not the dollar amount, but the fact that this guy was so bold to tag in front of patrons," Bethune said. "It intimidates customers and we can't allow criminals to use public areas like that."



TSB deputies arrested "Tanke" at his parent's home in South Los Angeles on June 26. *Photo by Jimmy Stroup*

Arresting the suspect

Fast forward to June 26, 7:13 a.m.

TSB deputies knocked on a door in South Los Angeles. The suspect, whose real name is William Poblano, was lead away in handcuffs while his mother and father looked on.

Inside the very clean house, deputies found evidence of tagging in Poblano's room and his brother's room. Poblano's room was littered with papers filled to the margins with "Tanke" written repeatedly.

On July 1, Poblano was charged with one felony count of vandalism. He remains in jail.

Deputies found "Tanke" based almost entirely on the information supplied to them by Green Line employees. Green Line Maintenance Specialist Dennis Nguyen tracked down the images that helped TSB find the tagger. Once the deputies had the image from the CCTV, Ely said it was "over."

"This was an easy one," Ely said. "Metro approached us with all that we needed – it was a no-brainer."

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Surrounded by video screens, Doug Middleton, newly appointed Director of Operations Training and Improvement, is at home in the OCI bus simulator.

Photo by Ned Racine

The What, Where and How: A Look at Operations Central Instruction

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 2, 2008) At the end of a very long hallway is an office door with a sign that reads "Please Use Other Door." But the owner of that door, the newly appointed head of Central Instruction (OCI) Doug Middleton, isn't all that serious about the sign being followed.

"I know what it says, but you can use it," he said. "I guess I should get people to walk around, but if it's easier for them to come through here, so be it."

This is the kind of approachable attitude Middleton has maintained since he first came to Metro in 2006 as transportation manager at San Gabriel Valley Division 9.

Middleton's new domain includes classrooms to teach operators and maintainers how to be operators and maintainers. Here the majority of new training occurs.

How much training? State regulations require a minimum of 15 hours of classroom instruction and 20 hours of bus operation for certification to drive a coach commercially.

Training operators on LA

"We blow those requirements out of the water," Middleton said. "Our training is 80 hours in class and approximately 30 hours behind the wheel. There are the state requirements for training, but then we have to train them on the big city: on L.A.

"OCI also trains potential operators on customer service requirements the

agency needs to maintain...they're learning all of that here at OCI," Middleton said.

New operator classes start every two weeks and generally contain 30 students. The classes run six weeks: a month in the classroom and two weeks of training in the OCI parking lot and on the streets.

OCI trains an average of 600 operators each year – a number Middleton said just keeps up with attrition from retirements and general staff losses.

Instructors at OCI are fully licensed by both state and federal authorities, so Metro's training program allows the operators to receive their Department of Motor Vehicles licenses internally.

"DMV lets us conduct our own testing for commercial driver's licenses," Middleton said. "All the supervisors and managers at OCI are certified by the DMV as licensors. We need that to save time, but also so we can make sure that the operators are qualified to our higher standards."

Improving the well-oiled machine

His new job started on May 27, but the ins and outs of Operations Central Instruction are something he's no stranger to.

"My background is in training," he said. "When I was at the [Orange County Transportation Authority], I was in instruction for eight years. Training here is like it was there – only bigger. The regulations are the same, the skills are the same. It's all very familiar to me."

Middleton said that the importance of OCI to the agency means it was a well-oiled machine when he took over the reins last month.

"I was pleased with the training the operators were getting when I was managing at the division, so I was encouraged by my experiences as a user of their product, so to speak," Middleton said. "But just because something isn't broken doesn't mean it can't be improved."

Middleton has plans for OCI's future.

Echoing the sentiments of transportation managers across the agency, he's investigating a standardized training process for transit operations supervisors.

Additionally, he's developing an experimental satellite training center in El Monte so operators save the trip downtown to the Metro Support Services Center (formerly RRC) to get their refresher training courses.

"It's a convenience factor for the division and for the employees," Middleton said. "With gas getting up there, this saves everyone a little money, too. If it works out, I hope to move training centers to the extreme western and southern areas of Los Angeles."

Middleton also plans to go through the training course himself, though he's a fully-qualified instructor already. He hopes to pick up on little areas where efficiency can save time and money in Metro's training enterprise.

"I know it's working well already," he said. "I just want to go through to see exactly what we do and how we do it – to make sure we're getting the best bang for the buck."

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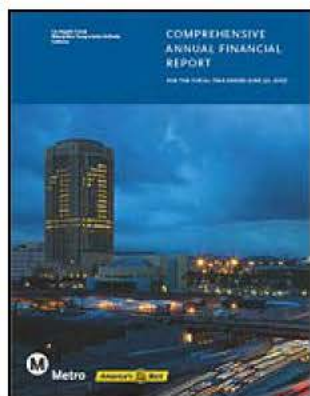
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Metro Financial Statements Win Ninth Consecutive Award



(July 2, 2008) If the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) award was a baseball player, Metro's Accounting Department would have enough to field a team.

For the ninth consecutive year, Metro's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) has earned the GFOA's highest honor, the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The CAFR award was for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007.

"It gets better every year," Josie Nicasio, Metro Controller, said, noting that the Accounting staff puts a great effort into meeting the GFOA's high standards. In Fiscal Year 2007, Metro received "proficient" ratings for all 17 categories. Nicasio compared that to receiving a report card with straight A's.

Accounting staff have already begun preparing for the Fiscal Year 2008 CAFR.

TAP Begins Roll-out to More Than 600 Third-party Vendors

(July 2, 2008) TAP Operations has begun rolling out TAP (Transit Access Pass) to more than 600 of Metro's third party vendors. Downtown Los Angeles vendors were selected as the first targeted area in the roll-out.

As of the July pass sales period, which began June 25, 19 Metro Downtown Los Angeles vendors were converted from selling monthly, weekly, zone 1 and zone 2 Metro paper passes to TAP.

The next area for the roll-out is the Wilshire Corridor.

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Metro field marketing representatives make the Sunset Strip Music Festival scene to promote Metro to the nightlife crowd.

Marketing Reps Aim to Show Potential Riders Taking Metro Is Cool

- Early reviews positive for field marketing representatives' debut at Sunset Strip Music Festival

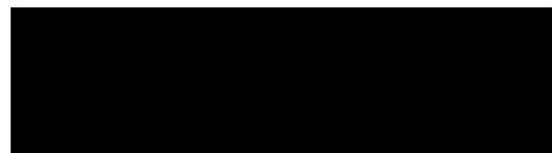
By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 3, 2008) They're cool, they're young, they're edgy and they want to show you why taking Metro is cool.

"They" are field marketing representatives, a group of energetic and personable women and men who debuted in Hollywood last weekend. Their appearance kicked off an effort to increase ridership by contacting potential riders in popular venues, rather than waiting for potential riders to find their way to Metro.

June 26 through 28 at the Sunset Strip Music Festival, for example, the marketing reps interacted with patrons of restaurants, shops, clubs and theaters. Friendly and approachable, they are trained to promote the Metro system.

Wearing distinctive red Metro T-shirts, they distributed buttons and pocket guides and generally touted Local Line 2 as a



convenient way to reach the entertainment spots on Sunset Boulevard.

Edgy.

"They're there with a smile and they're there to help [the public]," said Gricel Ferreyra, communications manager. The field reps are her brainchildren. "We want this group to project personality and edginess and coolness."

"The reason the Communications Department wanted to hire them was to use them as a distribution channel for our marketing material," explained Ferreyra, who added that the public's initial reaction to the new reps was very positive. "There is nothing like face-to-face interaction for growing someone's interest."

Hip.

Ferreyra wants the field reps—some of whom were regular Metro riders already—to help change the public's perception of Metro. For example, changing the perception of Metro's buses.

"We're telling people that not only is it a bus, but it can take you to work, to play, to night life," she said. "It can take you to the rest of the county."

Communications plans to use the field reps for other marketing efforts, including a campaign focusing on college campuses in the fall.

Later campaigns will reach out to teens; a holiday season effort will promote Metro as a more convenient way to shop, and a fall campaign focuses on Metro service to job-generating areas such as Warner Center, Downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena, Burbank, Glendale, Long Beach and Century City.

Cool.

Although the Metro reps are young, Ferreyra believes they will appeal to all potential riders. "These are trained marketing representatives," she explained. "I think all ages will approach them."

Ferreyra noted that this is just the beginning of the field reps' assignments. Communications hopes to use them for several years, expecting them to contribute to Metro's goal of increasing ridership by five percent a year.

"Our bottom line is trying to increase ridership, which everyone in the agency will benefit from," she said.



Adam Medina, wearing his marketing rep outfit, walks Sunset Boulevard on June 27 with fellow field marketing reps.

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[Metro Minute]

What Does Independence Day Mean to You?

(July 3, 2008) What do Metro employees think of current issues?

Bob Dalkos
Mechanic "A"
Central Maintenance:

The whole scene behind it is independence and patriotism. It's a good time to reflect on what's going on – the war in Iraq and all that. I like to give thanks to those who served and those here at home, too. It's also good to remind your kids that Independence Day isn't just about fireworks, but that sacrifice is part of it.



Jerry Woodson
Transit Operations Supervisor
Operations Central Instruction:

I recognize it for what it is, Independence Day. But I'm not big on holidays, personally. The agency allows us the day off – and I appreciate that. A lot of people don't get it off, at least not with pay. I'll be glad to spend the time with my family . . . and to sleep late.

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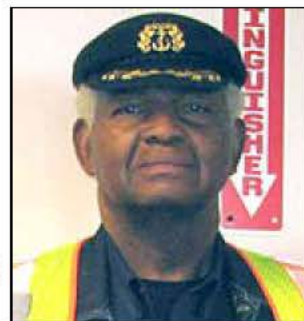
Services Are Planned for Facilities Maintenance's Johnny Manning

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 3, 2008) Funeral arrangements are pending for Johnny Will Manning, a facilities maintenance supervisor, who was found dead in his home Tuesday, July 1. Manning was 61.

He began with Metro in November 1981.

Hussein Farah, facilities maintenance manager, remembers Manning as a pleasantly mannered and affable man. Farah recalls Manning's love of photography and his weekends on Catalina Island.



Johnny Will Manning

Mary Powers, a fellow facilities maintenance supervisor, remembers Manning always being in good spirits. When someone asked him how he felt, Powers remembers Manning responding with a brief version of James Brown's "I Feel Good" and a joyful dance.

"His credo was: 'Life is good and God is with me. What else could I want?'" Powers recalls.

Manning is survived by his mother, Edna Manning, and sisters Mary and Doris. Manning is also survived by two brothers, Vincent and Robert.

"Facilities Maintenance and the Metro family are indebted to Johnny's long years of public service," Farah says. "He will be missed."

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San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Assistant Maintenance Manager Rich Herpers holds up a platoon photo from his time in Vietnam. A very young Rich Herpers is third from the left in the front row.

Career Army Veteran Reflects on Military Service

Many Americans will spend Independence Day thinking of the service of our armed forces. Army Special Forces veteran Rich Herpers requires no special day to remind him.

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 3, 2008) Inspired by a neighbor, San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Assistant Maintenance Manager Rich Herpers joined the Army in 1958. Just 17 years old, he was too young to enlist without his parent's permission.

"I wanted to go in as a paratrooper," Herpers says. "My neighbor was this little Irish guy, really small, and he told me all about how he was in the 82nd Airborne,

and what they did in Europe.

"So that's what I did. And that's where I ended up – 82nd Airborne," he recalls.

Then, in 1961, after three years of service with the 82nd, Herpers left the Army, thinking he'd done his duty, and found a job in a bank's computer division.

But Herpers was "bored to death." So when the Vietnam War started escalating, Herpers voluntarily re-enlisted in 1964. He took an "easy" job in the Army's financial world.

But the lure of action – and the added pay bonus of being on parachute status – proved too much for Herpers. He soon found himself in Vietnam in Special Forces, beginning six years "in country."

Vietnam Part I

His first assignment was with a reconnaissance unit. Herpers and his team (usually 12 men) would head into dangerous regions trying to learn the lay of the land and assessing enemy strength.

Generally, each reconnaissance mission lasted five days. Two days of down time – if they were lucky – and then back into the field, always pressing forward.

"Sometimes we weren't even down an hour before we had to get pulled out on the string [by helicopter]," Herpers says.

Near the end of his time with the reconnaissance unit, Herpers was wounded.

"I didn't even know it," Herpers recalls. "The adrenaline was pumping, you know. We get pulled out and my friend says to me, 'Rich, what happened to your knee?'"

Bombed and wounded

"I look down and my left knee's got this hole through it," he says. "I don't know if it was a bullet or some chunk of tree that hammered it. They [had] dropped a 500-pound [bomb] on us, so the trees were exploding."

Herpers spent nine days recuperating and then was back in the field.

Stateside in 1968 and some of 1969, Herpers managed to squeeze in some R&R, some training and a wedding. The wedding seems to have been a good idea, as Herpers and his wife Billha are soon to celebrate their 40th anniversary.

"She was teaching Hebrew in a language program in Washington D.C. when we met," Herpers said. "Soon after, I was back to Vietnam. The military is hard on families that way. Lots of time away, lots of stress."

Vietnam Part II

Herpers' second trip to Vietnam lasted another three years: 1969 to 1971. This time he was assigned to a Special Forces outfit designed for direct contact with enemy forces.

Generally, Herpers' outfit would be inserted for 22- to 25-day missions "looking for the enemy" in territory controlled by the North Vietnamese.

"Sometimes you couldn't tell the good guys from the bad," Herpers remembers. "They'd be in the villages during the day and then fighting us at night."

To address that problem, his unit recruited entire villages. They would pay the village members to be their Vietnamese contacts in the region, feed intelligence to the Americans and to fight alongside Herpers and his buddies.



This 1976 photo shows Master Sergeant (E-8) Rich Herpers in full dress uniform. Herpers said his time at E-8 and in command of a Special Forces unit was the "most rewarding" time he spent in the military.

"In a lot of cases they were grateful we were there," Herpers says. "We had medical personnel and would routinely use their knowledge and supplies to help the villages we were cooperating with.

"We thought we were doing the right thing," he explains. "Most of us just wanted to help the people. Would it have been better if we'd never gone? We can't answer that. No one can."

After the war

By the end of Vietnam, Herpers had so much time invested in the military that a career was only natural. He spent the rest of his enlistment mostly stateside, working nuclear security and, finally, training Special Operations soldiers.

Herpers retired in 1983 as a Sergeant Major (E-9), the highest enlisted rank. He kicked around some after he retired: He worked with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and moved to Israel for a few years. He ended up in California where he started with Metro in 1990.

Eighteen years later he finds himself in El Monte at the San Gabriel Valley Division, trying to impart some of the lessons he learned in a lifetime of military service to his employees.

"We're supposed to teach people all that you know, not hold onto that knowledge," he says.

Herpers boils down his service in a single word: camaraderie.

"Sure, I was proud of my service," he says. "But the people I met were the difference. The closeness you feel with people who you served with isn't something you can duplicate."

Teamwork and friendship are central to his perspective on life. Nearly every story he tells begins with, "My friend and I were...", or, "We went to...."

Days like Independence Day remind Herpers of his service and the friends he served with – those he still knows and those he lost.

"I think about it all the time," Herpers says. "But it doesn't take a special day to remind me of what happened, what I participated in.

"I feel lucky. Most of us who made it back feel lucky. We're not happy [about Vietnam]...most of us lost good friends and that feels bad," he explains. "But the friendships I made while I was in [the military] I wouldn't trade for anything."

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Private Services Planned for Harry Hoegeman, Retired Maintenance Manager

(July 8, 2007) Harry Hoegeman, a retired Metro employee with more than 39 years' service, died June 20 from lung cancer at his home in Sierra City, Calif. He was 93.

Hoegeman's hire date—July 1940—far preceded creation of Metro. A relief division maintenance manager at several bus divisions, Hoegeman retired in September 1979.

According to his daughter, Diane Crum, senior secretary in Maintenance Administration, RTD sent Hoegeman to live in Germany for a year while he inspected the assembly of the original RTD articulated buses, built in 1978-79.

Crum recalls her father's favorite retirement activity was sitting in his recliner and watching the Yuba River flow past his home.

Hoegeman is survived by his wife of 68 years, Lois. He is also survived by three daughters, two grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

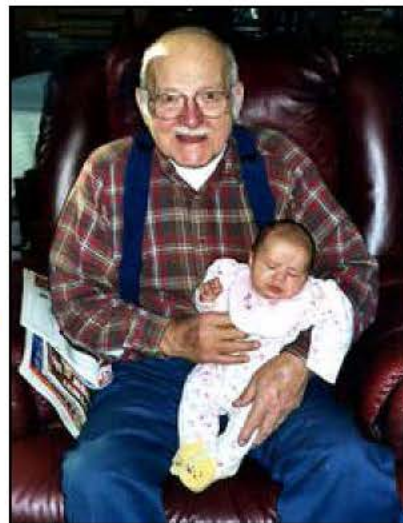


Photo from November 2005 shows Harry Hoegeman with great granddaughter Olivia Bates.

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4.0% Pay Raise Effective July 1; Reflected in July 18 Paychecks

- Non-contract salary ranges also increase 4.0 percent

(July 8, 2008) Most Metro employees will receive a 4.0 percent across-the-board pay hike, effective July 1.

The pay raise will be reflected in the July 18 paychecks, the first paycheck of the new fiscal year. The only exception will be Teamsters employees whose 4.0 percent pay increase will go into effect Oct. 1 under the union's collective bargaining agreement.

For non-contract employees, Board approval of the FY 2009 budget also permits a 4.0 percent adjustment in salary ranges.

As July 1, 2008 fell in the first Tuesday of the pay period ending July 12, 2008, the July 18, 2008 paycheck will only reflect the salary increase for 10 of the 12 days in the pay period. The full increase will be reflected in the August 1, 2008 paycheck.



"The pay increase and the salary range adjustment will help Metro stay competitive in the L.A. market," said Stefan Chasnov, deputy executive officer of Human Resources.

To be eligible for the full 4.0 percent pay raise, non-contract employees:

- Must be on active status as of July 1, 2008;
- Must have been with Metro for the entire FY 2008 fiscal year;
- Must have completed the initial new-hire probationary period;
- Must receive an overall rating of Effective, Commendable or Outstanding.

The new pay rates will be reflected in the E-Time system and in Oracle this week. See [Implementation Guidelines](#) (PDF)

Employees who were hired during the course of the year, Chasnov said, will receive a pro-rated raise based on the number of hours worked. An employee hired Jan. 1, 2008, for example, would receive half the 4.0 percent pay increase.

For employees who were promoted during the year, the raise will be a "blend" of the employee's two pay rates, Chasnov explained. The pay

increase for an employee promoted on Jan. 1, 2008, for example, would be based on six months at the initial pay rate and six months at the new pay rate.

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2008, interns and as-needed employees are not eligible for the pay increase.

Employees who received an overall performance rating of "Needs Improvement" will not receive the 4.0 percent raise until they successfully complete their Plan of Improvement and bring their rate up to "Effective."

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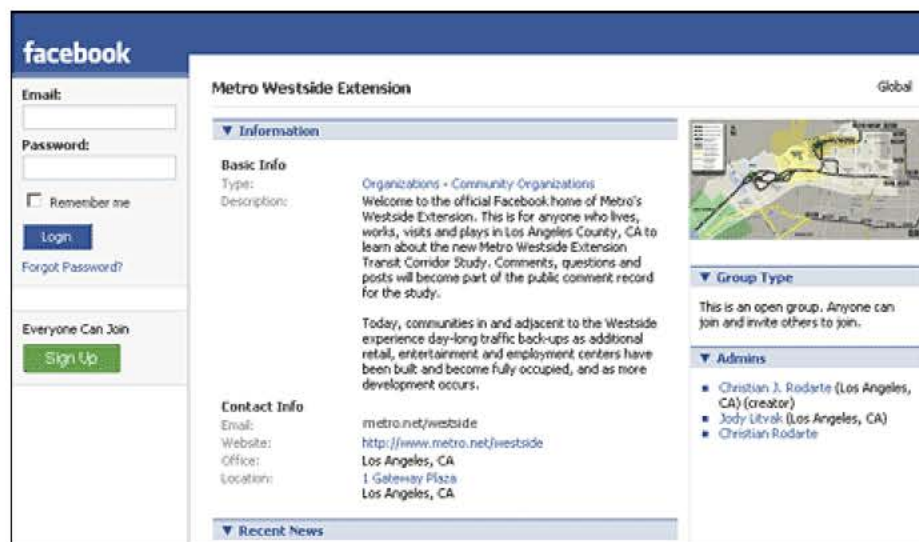
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Online Novice Puts a New 'Face' on Westside Study Outreach

BY Ned Racine, Editor

(July 8, 2008) Jody Feerst Litvak is the first to insist she is not a computer expert, but because she kept an open mind about the virtual world, Metro's Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study team has a new way to reach the transit curious.

That new way is a "Facebook" page. Part of the exploding number of social networking websites, a Facebook page allows visitors to join a virtual organization and interact with other members of that online community.

"All I had ever seen of Facebook was what [my teenagers] would let me glance at over their shoulders as they quickly shut it down," Litvak said, laughing. But she kept an open mind.

Brought along by Matt Barrett, Policy, Research and Library Services Administrator, and Christian Rodarte, an outreach consultant to the Westside area study team, Litvak began to see the value of the digital tool, particularly in reaching college students and 20-something website visitors.



Jody Feerst Litvak is always looking for new ways to reach people curious about the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study.

Photo by Ned Racine

"It was a way to reach out and involve people who were not necessarily

being reached through all of our other means," Litvak said.

The growing population of the online group surprises and pleases her. Since going public with the group in mid-April, more than 750 Facebook members have joined the group, more than half the number of email addresses the study team had gathered since the study began.

One thing Litvak values from this digital communication is the feedback she receives.

"People will tell you how it's working for them and how it isn't," she explained. "When we first started off, we were so excited about this . . . we were sending messages every third day. I heard back from somebody who said, 'If you keep bugging me and filling my inbox, I'm going to leave the group.' I realized we were a little too excited."

And she notices that the comments she receives are less structured than what she would hear at a public meeting. "Here people can respond when they want to, how they want to; people can respond to others directly, which never happens in a public meeting."

Litvak will make these online comments part of the study record, just as if they were verbal comments received during a public meeting or written comments submitted formally.

Using the Facebook group, she draws her members' attention to new information and events affecting the discussion of transportation on the Westside: links to other websites, meeting notices and media reports.

The Westside study team adds new material continually, because if her visitors do not return, the value of the Facebook page shrinks.

And now, she said, visitors are speaking directly to each other, correcting inaccurate information and bringing new members up to speed. Some of her members have a through knowledge of Los Angeles County transportation issues and some do not.

Would she recommend a social networking website for other projects?

"I think it depends on what [the project] is. I'm more and more becoming a fan of using these various new mediums as ways of communicating with people," she said. "I think it behooves us to watch these [websites] and jump in and comment when we can." Now she hands out both her Facebook address (Metro Westside Extension) with her website address www.metro.net/westside.

"I am still learning," she said. "I am still a neophyte. I've had a lot of help along the way."

And, yes, her high school and college student are still appalled their mother has a Facebook page.

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Six Employees of the Quarter Represent Metro's Best

(July 9, 2008) Six employees have been chosen for "Employee of the Quarter" for third quarter of FY 2008, each representing the best of Metro employees, teamwork, customer satisfaction, innovation and integrity.

Selected were Alfonso De Alba of Arthur Winston Division 5 Maintenance; Doyle Flock and Carol Silver from the San Fernando Valley Sector's Scheduling Unit; John Flores of General Services; Salvatore Bottancino from Rail Fleet Services; and Luis Salas of South Bay Division 18 Maintenance.

• Employees – Alfonso De Alba



Alfonso De Alba

Alfonso De Alba, mechanic, performs above and beyond the call of duty by keeping up-to-date on new technologies being developed. He attends the latest training available, takes what he has learned and shares his new insight with other mechanics at Arthur Winston Division 5. Last year his skills were put to the test during an eight-hour examination; at the conclusion of the exam, De Alba was promoted to Master Mechanic. De Alba maintains a consistency in his work ethic and can always be counted on to perform at his highest level.

• Teamwork – Doyle Flock and Carol Silver, Scheduling Unit, San Fernando Valley Sector

Doyle Flock and Carol Silver successfully collaborated to lead their co-workers to continuously strive for excellence.

Flock has completed several important tasks that will enable the Metro San Fernando Valley Sector to meet essential goals and objectives. For the June 2008 service changes, Doyle developed changes in the bus system that will significantly reduce operating costs and help the sector achieve its target budget.



Doyle Flock

Silver is responsible for the development and coordination of the sector's Service Change Program for June 2008. Silver produced the public hearing notice, established the hearing date, analyzed all 16 proposals to determine the impact to existing bus riders and documented more than 205 public comments. As a result, the comments have made major contributions to the San Fernando Valley.

- **Customer Satisfaction – John Flores, General Services**

While operating the Metro Gateway Building General Services Help Desk, John Flores has consistently provided exceptional customer service to Metro employees and visitors. There have been countless times when Flores has stayed past his assigned shift to help co-workers with situations such as floods and elevator problems. He does his best to make sure customers are satisfied with all the department services provided. If he cannot help them, he will offer alternative solutions. Flores treats all employees including visitors with courtesy and respect. Many times customers specifically ask for Flores to address their needs and questions. Flores' motto is "I do my best to support my management staff and to elevate the image of our department."



John Flores

- **Innovation – Salvatore Bottancino, Rail Warranty Equipment Specialist**



Salvatore Bottancino

Salvatore Bottancino demonstrated innovation by displaying a relentless and energetic drive in his responsibilities when overseeing the modification and quality control work done by AB Engineers and Contractors. As a contributor to the 2550 Procurement QA Warranty Program, Bottancino has independent tracking systems for parts and components, guaranteeing maximum warranty recovery financial returns and cost avoidance tracking. Bottancino has repeatedly demonstrated his exceptional qualities of leadership and technical knowledge that identify him as truly outstanding and committed to Metro's Rail QA Warranty

Program.

- **Integrity – Luis Salas, Shop Steward**

Luis Salas has patience, knowledge and integrity, which he uses to handle everyday occurrences at South Bay Division 18. He shares his knowledge and expertise with everyone in the body shop. Salas is involved with many of the activities at Division 18 and is a member of the Safety Committee. Salas makes sure that all company and union issues are handled as fairly as possible. Along with his Metro responsibilities, he is also a reserve Deputy Sheriff for Los Angeles County.



Luis Salas

--From Sarah Winfrey

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Sergio Renteria, mechanic "A" and Mustafa Bey, mechanic "B" replace connectors for transmission diagnosis as part of the Re-Power process.

Mid-life/Re-power Program Reconditions Buses to Extend Life

- The multi-million project at Central Maintenance replaces major portions of the coaches – including the engine and transmission

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 9, 2008) If you had driven your vehicle 300,000 miles, you might consider trading it in for some new, flashy replacement.

Unfortunately for Metro, trading in a 40,000 pound bus for the latest model isn't an option. To compensate for the lack of local bus dealerships with sweet trade-in deals, Metro has figured a way to make new buses out of old ones.

The Mid-life/Re-power program does just what the name implies. At a bus' mid-life point (around 350,000 miles – roughly six to nine years of service, depending on the area of service), the coach is shipped to Central Maintenance for a 60-day rehabilitation—a health spa for aging buses.

"We take the whole bus and refurbish it," said Bruce Ramsey, Repair and Refurbish equipment maintenance supervisor, who oversees one segment of the process. "They come in looking old and go out looking new. It's almost like a whole new bus."

The 6300 Neoplan series buses have already been through the process, as have some of the 6700 Neoplan series. Central Maintenance has completed 168 of 225 of the New Flyer Hi-Floor 5000 series and. The New Flyer 5300

series is waiting in the on-deck circle.

The process begins when a bus is repainted at Central Maintenance's massive paint shop. The body is un-dented, if needed, and given a new veneer to match the agency's current style guidelines. Local line buses come in with the older-style white bodies and leave in brilliant poppy.

Each coach receives two gallons of poppy paint (red on Rapid), a gallon of silver, a gallon of clear coat and a final gallon of sealer to protect the paint from the elements.



Jonathan Jackson, mechanic "A" adjusts a coolant line before installing.

The windows are replaced at this stage, as are the plastic shields that help defend against vandalism. The trouble spots for vandalism on the bus' interior are now being painted with a tough material, much like the bed lining for a truck, making it easier to scrub away graffiti. The seats are also removed and replaced.

"The chairs are usually just thrown away," Ramsey said. "Believe it or not, it's usually cheaper for us just to replace the whole [seat]."

Mid-life

After the body's "cherried out," as the mechanics say, the buses move to the mid-life portion of the program. Here, a huge portion of the coach's inner and outer workings are replaced or rebuilt.

"For each bus, there's a list of things that will be replaced no matter what, which we call '100 percent' items," Ramsey said. "Stores will send us down a kit with the 100 percent items in it.

"As we tear it apart, we'll notice things that need to get replaced, too, and we'll take care of that as needed," he said.

Though the inventory of replaced parts is long, a short list includes brakes, wheelchair lift assembly, CNG fuel tanks and wheel covers—even the windshield wipers.

On the 5000 series, Ramsey said they've been noticing the same kind of

quirky problems on almost every bus: the rear differentials (the axles) are all slightly cracked.

"The original differentials are all coming in cracked and we have to weld them to repair," he said. "You can't even buy some of this stuff – it's obsolete – so we have to figure out ways to make it work.

"We tried to order some of what we needed to repair some of these problems and it took nine months to get. Most of the time it's faster and more cost-effective to do it ourselves," he said.

[Continued in Part II](#): Performing the human equivalent of heart surgery, Central Maintenance replaces engines and innovates to make them fit.

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Photos by Peter Watkinson



Jack Bartman finds Janice Ortiz particularly helpful to elderly riders.



Ray Guinn nominated Steve Burns for the "We Couldn't Go Anywhere Without You" honor in part because of Burns' eagerness to answer other customers' questions about Metro service. Burns commutes from his home in West Covina to his job at an auto body shop in Alhambra.

Three Among Millions Honored to Begin San Gabriel Valley Sector Campaign

Customer selections begin 'We Couldn't Go Anywhere Without You' campaign

(July 9, 2008) Of the millions of customers the San Gabriel Valley Sector moves each year, three were chosen as the sector's best to kick off the sector's "We Couldn't Go Anywhere Without You" effort.

To highlight the value of its riders, the Metro San Gabriel Valley Governance Council honored the three winners at the Governance Council chambers on June 9. Picked from 25 nominees, Steve Burns, Janice Ortiz and Robert Ramos—as well as the operators who nominated them—received certificates and a Metro gift bag.

The smiling faces of these customers and operators will also be featured on car cards within sector buses and ads in various San Gabriel Valley publications.

Three Valued Customers

Burns commutes every day from his home in West Covina to his job at an auto body shop in Alhambra.

"Steve is an exemplary Metro customer. He's quick to help his fellow passengers when they have questions about our service," said San Gabriel Valley Operator Ray Guinn, who nominated Burns for recognition.

Ortiz depends on Metro daily to reach her job in Temple City. Bus Operator Jack Bartman, who nominated Ortiz for recognition, said, "Janice has ridden with me almost daily for nearly ten years. She is always cheerful and helpful to new passengers—especially the elderly."

Since Ramos suffered a spinal injury 17 years ago, Metro has been his sole source of transportation. The father of



Richard Lopez nominated Robert Ramos in part because of Ramos' great sense of humor.

two is enrolled in college and rides Metro to school. Bus Operator Richard Lopez, who nominated Ramos for recognition, said, "Robert has a great sense of humor, is always happy and is one of my favorite riders."

In March, San Gabriel Valley operators were asked to nominate customers they felt should be recognized as San Gabriel Valley's best. Sector staff reviewed all of the nominations and selected Burns, Ortiz and Ramos to receive the initial awards.

be awarded later in the year.

Additional customers and operators will

--From David Hershenson

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Crossroads Division 2 Bus Operator Brian Floyd joined Metro Director of Operations System Support Pat Astredo and Division 2 Bus Operator Vincent Owens to help clean up three houses in a Compton neighborhood just a half mile south of the Metro Blue Line. *Photo by Jimmy Stroup*

Metro Employees Help Take Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Back 'One House at a Time'

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 10, 2008) It's amazing what 100 people and \$2,000 can do on a Saturday morning.

Once every two months, a group of volunteers – Metro employees among them – takes as many people as it can round up, a little money and a little muscle, and transforms houses in need of some paint and yard work, as they did June 28.

"We take a house and clean it up: yard, trash, whatever," said Pat Astredo, Metro's director of Operations System Support. "Then we paint and do it all within four hours. Whatever we can do in four hours. Then we head back to the staging point and have something good to eat."

This particular campaign started at Emmanuel Reformed Church in Paramount, the church Astredo attends.

The effort began as a small idea – one house, a few volunteers. Two years later, the operation now counts nearly 800 volunteers each time it heads out to repair a home, in part because Emmanuel Reformed teamed up with Faith Inspirational Missionary Church in Compton.

"I started noticing as we'd do these [cleanups], especially after we teamed

with Faith Inspirational, that we had a lot of Metro employees who came out to help," Astredo said.

Creating pride within the community

Vincent Owens, Crossroads Depot Division 2 bus operator, has been involved in the rehabilitation project early on. His brother Rafer is the pastor of Faith Inspirational. Vincent attends with his wife, Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens.

"It's all free, just to help the community," Owens said. "We want to get the church out in the neighborhoods to let people know that we're here and that we want to help out if we can.

"Compton has a bad name . . . drugs, violence, all that. But we can turn it around with little things like this," he said.

The rehabilitation program isn't picky choosing the houses it helps: If you're having some trouble and you could use a fresh coat of paint or the junk hauled from your yard, they'll gladly assist you.

"We try to hone in on people with needs," Astredo said. "Single parents, older folks, people with disabilities or illnesses."

Astredo said the program works to help people on various levels. They get their place cleaned and painted, but also it improves the appeal of the home to the owners and the neighbors, creating a feeling of positive ownership.

'Inch by inch'

"We find out about a lot of the properties we fix up through the Sheriff's [Department]," Owens said. "A house that's in bad shape because it was a drug house or something like that."

Local mail carriers also mention potential clean-up projects. "They're in the neighborhood every day, walking around," Astredo said. "They know which houses need . . . help the most."

Although the program is now large enough to require Astredo to coordinate schedules and volunteers, the purpose of the work remains small.

"It helps the community altogether," Division 2 Bus Operator Brian Floyd said. "You've got to start somewhere. Somebody said once, 'Inch by inch, anything's a cinch.' Well, if you start small, anything's possible.

"This is the beginning of a dream to take the City of Compton back. We're supposed to be helping those less fortunate than we are," Floyd concluded. "I'm only trying to do what I can to help it along."


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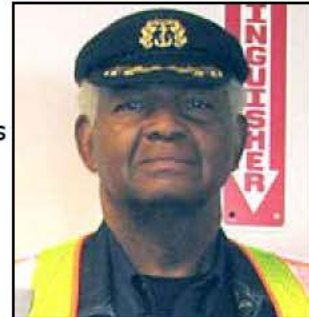
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Saturday Services Planned for Facilities Maintenance's Johnny Manning

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 10, 2008) A memorial service will be held this Saturday, July 12 for Johnny Will Manning, a facilities maintenance supervisor. Manning was 61.

The service will be held at Greater Starlight Missionary Baptist Church, 8018 South San Pedro St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90003. The service begins at 10 a.m.



Johnny Will Manning

Manning began with Metro in November 1981.

Hussein Farah, facilities maintenance manager, remembers Manning as a pleasantly mannered and affable man. Farah recalls Manning's love of photography and his weekends on Catalina Island.

Mary Powers, a fellow facilities maintenance supervisor, remembers Manning always being in good spirits. When someone asked him how he felt, Powers remembers Manning responding with a brief version of James Brown's "I Feel Good" and a joyful dance.

"His credo was: 'Life is good and God is with me. What else could I want?'" Powers recalls.

Manning, an Army veteran, is survived by his mother, Edna Manning, and sisters Mary and Doris. Manning is also survived by two brothers, Vincent and Robert.

"Facilities Maintenance and the Metro family are indebted to Johnny's long years of public service," Farah says. "He will be missed."

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Explaining what work remains, Mustafa Bey, mechanic "B," stands beside a newly-installed Cummins 8.9 ISL-G engine. *Photos by Ned Racine*

Mid-life/Re-power Program Requires Innovation Power to Finish Job

- Brainpower adapts coaches to new, cleaner engines

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 10, 2008) Necessity – in this case the lack of replacement parts – became the mother of invention in the next step of the mid-life process: Re-power.

Originally, the New Flyer Hi-Floor 5000 series came with a Detroit engine. But it's no longer being manufactured, so replacement parts aren't being fabricated.

"We can't get that series engine anymore," said Curtis Clark, Running Repair equipment maintenance supervisor, who runs the re-power process. "It's obsolete. Parts are difficult to procure for this engine, so we had to come up with something different."

"Different" is a Cummins 8.9 ISL-G engine, the engine used in the newer articulated coaches, which meets current state and federal standards for engines, making it kinder to the environment than the 10-year-old Detroit models.

"The engine is cleaner," Clark said. "[Basically] 2008 standards versus what was the EPA standard in 1999. No contest."

One reason the engine is cleaner is that the Cummins engine uses a

catalytic converter instead of a muffler. Catalytic converters are nice to Mother Earth, but rough on designers—at least in this case. Central Maintenance had to squeeze the bigger, hotter converter assembly where the thinner, cooler muffler once went.

"The body shop had to redesign the rear quarter panel, since a catalytic converter will require additional maintenance that a muffler didn't," Clark said. "Also it had to be widened and lined with heat and flame-retardant material to make it safe."



David Garcia, a body repairer "A," removes corrosion from a New Flyer Hi-Floor 5000 series bus. The bus has already been steam cleaned and had its decals removed.

Installing the Cummins engine itself required some innovation. Custom mounting brackets had to be designed and fabricated at the machine and weld shops at Central Maintenance. The new red monster engines also required a stronger cooling system—more challenges for the Metro designers and mechanics.

For the 5000 series now enjoying a mid-life and re-power overhaul, Machinist Leader Terry Diederichs, Machinist Chris Young, Welder Leader Phil Martinez, and Master Mechanics Dave Santillanez and Mike Palmer designed the mounts and adapters that made the Cummins fit in the Detroit engine's former home. Equipment Maintenance Manager John Petres oversaw the technical aspects of the adaptation.

"What we're doing, no one has ever done this before; we're making an engine fit where another was designed to go," Clark said.

Costs, time, and recycling

Each bus spends 680 hours at Central Maintenance getting its mid-life retreat. Of that total 280 to 350 hours are spent being repainted and undinged at the paint and body shop.

The mid-life segment of the process takes between 142 and 212 hours. The bus is then aligned with its new parts and sent to get a new engine and a new or rebuilt transmission. Clark's mechanics replace the old Detroit with a new Cummins in 188 hours.

Support Shops Equipment Maintenance Manager Cary Stevens said Central Maintenance saves whatever it can to use as replacement parts for buses not quite ready for a mid-life overhaul.

How much does this cost? The budget for the Mid-life/Re-power program is \$25 million for the 2009 fiscal year. Central Maintenance turns out six buses a week on average, fresh and ready to hit the road for another 300,000 miles.

"Everyone is involved in this process. It's a huge program," Clark said.

[Continued from Part I:](#) No special trade in offers for these well-traveled vehicles.

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Board Committees to Consider Expansion of Metro Rapid Signal Priority System, Private Security Services Contract and Big Rig Service Patrol Program

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- [Item 26, Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel Contract](#)

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 15, 2008) Topics as diverse as buying ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, making the Big Rig Service Patrol permanent and expanding the Metro Rapid Signal Priority system are on four Board committee agendas this Wednesday and Thursday.

Item 7, Expansion of Metro Rapid Signal Priority.

The Planning and Programming Committee will weigh recommending Metro award a contract to expand the Metro Rapid Signal Priority system.

The fixed-price contract would total almost \$8 million and provide professional services.

This second phase of the Countywide Signal Priority (CSP) rollout would use wireless technology to support Metro Rapid operations along the Manchester, Garvey-Chavez and Atlantic corridors, eliminating gaps in the signal priority system.

The firm fixed-price contract would include designing, procuring and implementing signal priority for these final three Metro Rapid corridors requiring CSP technology.

July Committee Meetings

Wednesday, July 16

1 p.m. – Planning and Programming
2:30 p.m. – Finance and Budget

Thursday, July 17

9:00 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit
11 a.m. – Construction (Cancelled)

12 noon – Operations

Thursday, July 24

9:30 a.m. – Full Board Meeting

Item 11, Memorandum of Understanding Among Three County Agencies.

The Finance and Budget Committee will decide whether to recommend that the Board approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among Metro and the County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles Unified School District.

The MOU seeks to limit litigation against each other and improve the agencies’ defenses against third-party claims. Metro staff believes the

MOU would reduce administrative expenses, including legal costs. The staff also believes greater cooperation among the three agencies may reduce the costs of settlements and jury verdicts.

Item 17, Position on Current State Legislation.

The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider recommending the Board take a position on SB 1350 (Cedillo). The bill would authorize a public-private partnership to construct the 710 Gap Closure project. The bill would authorize the imposition of tolls and specify a design/build procurement process for the project.

The 710 Gap Closure project would close the gap between Interstate 10 and Interstate 210.

The legislation would specifically give Caltrans the responsibility for preparing reports and documents to be used in preparing proposals to complete design, construction and operation of a tunnel joining the two interstate highways.

In consultation with Caltrans, Metro would determine whether the tunnel project should be developed as a design-build project or developed as part of an agreement between Metro and a private entity.

Item 18, Private Security Services Contract.

The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider recommending that the Board authorize a five-year, \$24.3 million contract for private security contractor services, effective Sept. 2008.

Contracted private security already contributes to the agency security force, working with Metro Security and the Sheriff's Department.

Private security personnel are deployed at property and facilities throughout Metro's service area, including employee parking facilities, Metro Rail and bus system parking lots and support facilities.

The base contract runs three years, with two one-year options, totaling a potential contract length of five years.

Item 21, Contract for Safety Gloves.

The Operations Committee addresses the agency's appetite for safety gloves as it weighs recommending the Board award a 36-month, firm fixed-price contract for slightly more than \$1 million spread among three firms.

Material Management will store the gloves, which previously had been purchased on an as-needed basis. Metro staff believes awarding the contract will result in lower costs and the manufacturers' commitment to availability and price stability.

The contract includes a variety of gloves, including those referred to as glass handling gloves, blacksmith gloves and welding gloves.

Item 22, Integrate Eastside Extension into SCADA.

The Operations Committee will consider recommending the Board approve a \$1.7 million contract to upgrade the existing Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) System to integrate the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Integrating the new light rail line, scheduled to open in 2009, would require additional computer hardware, updates to existing databases, additional functions and updates to documentation and training.

SCADA allows rail operations to be remotely supervised and controlled from a central location, including train movement and fire and gas detection.

Item 23, Purchase of 223 Bus Re-Power Kits.

To support the on-going Re-Power campaign to rejuvenate Metro New Flyer 5300 series buses, the Operations Committee will consider recommending the Board approve a \$2 million contract.

The fixed-price contract will purchase 223 Re-Power kits. Each kit includes a wiring harness, hydraulic line, tubing and insulation systems. The components of each kit have been designed to fit within the engine compartment of the New Flyer Low Floor 5300 series.

Item 24, On-Going and Expanded Big Rig Service Patrol.

The Operations Committee will weigh recommending that the Board adopt the Big Rig Service Patrol as a permanent operation and expand the service onto the SR-91 freeway.

The Big Rig Service Patrol's three-year demonstration project began in October 2005. The Board later authorized the demonstration until June 30, 2009. Metro staff seeks Board action now so an on-going project can be readied for a start date of July 1, 2009 or earlier.

Evaluation of the Big Rig Service Patrol finds a benefit-to-cost ratio comparable to the entire Metro Freeway Service Patrol program. As of April 2008, the Big Rig Service Patrol has logged 7,276 assists.

Item 26, Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel Contract.

The Operations Committee will weigh recommending the Board award a 36-month, adjustable rate contract for ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel.

Metro uses the fuel for operation of its fleet of 108 diesel buses and 90 non-revenue vehicles using diesel fuel.

Although Metro has been gradually retiring diesel buses since Fiscal Year 2007, some diesel buses will remain in service for the next few years. Metro staff anticipates the agency using approximately 2.0 million gallons of the fuel in Fiscal Year 2009 and approximately 1.0 million gallons in Fiscal Year 10.

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Metro's Sharad Mulchand, Alva Carrasco and Raymond Wang (from left) all graduated this year from San Jose State University's Mineta Transportation Institute. The Institute allows for study in satellite classes held at Gateway and confers a Masters of Science in Transportation Management. *Photo courtesy of Alva Carrasco.*

Mineta Transportation Institute Classes Lead to Masters Degrees

- Alva Carrasco, Sharad Mulchand and Raymond Wang took night classes at Metro Headquarters through Mineta Transportation Institute

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 15, 2008) Three of Metro's brightest recently enriched their knowledge by earning Masters of Science degrees in Transportation Management through the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) at San Jose State University.

Division 10 Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco, Transportation Planning Manager Sharad Mulchand and Cost Estimator Raymond Wang were each awarded their MS on June 28 in a ceremony attended by former congressman and MTI founder Norman Mineta.

"[Mineta] saw a need for education and research in transportation and created the outreach program through San Jose State," Wang explained. "It's a unique field and this program really caters to the specialized knowledge in transportation."

Carrasco, Mulchand and Wang completed the full-term, 30-credit Masters

program. (There is also a four-class certificate program.) Courses were taught in the evenings, mainly at Gateway. Marion Colston, director of Strategic Organizational Planning, helped provide the space and equipment needed to teach the courses.

"It makes it a lot easier for Metro employees to take the courses, having them right here in the building," Mulchand said. "I encourage any Metro employee to give it a try. Most of us get reimbursed for the classes and the books, so all it takes is a little effort and dedication."

Eligible for tuition reimbursement

Because they are taught through an accredited institution, both the MTI Masters and certificate programs are eligible for whatever tuition reimbursement each Metro employee's contract allows.

Wang said the knowledge learned in class isn't the only benefit to taking classes with other Metro employees. He met people from all segments of transportation—such as Carrasco and Mulchand—that his job on the Gateway Tower's 12th floor might never allow him to meet professionally.

The classes are taught by a mix of working professionals in the field and university-tenured professors. Metro's Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond has been spotted teaching marketing courses for the program.

"It's nice to have people in the field teaching us about the field," Wang said. "Usually in a class you learn about stuff that's happened in the past or isn't timely, but in these classes we're getting the up-to-date material our instructors are working with every day."

All three of the recent graduates found the program unusually germane to their Metro work. Each mentioned that some of her or his undergraduate work was irrelevant to their professional ambitions, but that this program was geared toward pertinent transportation information.

"It's untraditional in that it's focused on transportation," Carrasco said. "You really do learn things that you can literally take to work and use to your advantage the very next day. In that respect, it's very fulfilling."

For information on the program, you can visit MTI at <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/mtiportal/index.html>.


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Metro.net takes a dynamic turn with new look, easy-to-find features

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(July 15, 2008) Metro will launch its new homepage makeover Wednesday with a fresh take on more transit-friendly features for all visitors to the external website.

The homepage remake is more dynamic and interactive with special new buttons and sections that make it easier for the Metro customer to access the online information they need.

"We improved the look and feel of Metro's website, so that it's more exciting and more engaging for people to visit metro.net," said Communications Manager Vivian L. Tran, who led the project with the in-house web team.

New additions to the homepage include a direct link to Free Park and Ride Lots, a new section called "In the Loop," a Metro trivia feature and a quick button to get to resources such as the Transportation Library and Archives. The Metro Store also has its own new navigation tab at the top of the homepage.

The Spotlight section features interesting images, videos and information that rotate constantly throughout the day. "We saw it as an opportunity for us to highlight some very timely and critical transportation issues, such as Congestion Pricing, and still include fun facts and things to do," Tran said.

The web team integrated design with function to spark a virtual exchange of information with Metro's customers. The team looked at other transit agency websites and took a fresh approach to it, said Creative Services Design Manager Christian Rocha.

"This is more of an evolution of the current webpage than a complete redesign," Rocha said.

"We really wanted to promote the ridership component of the home page

What's New!



- It's bigger!
- *How to Ride* section is emphasized, easy to use
- More graphical buttons call out *System Service Alerts*, *Real-Time Traffic* and *Metro E-mail Updates*.
- Size of *Trip Planner* is more compact.
- Easy access to *Free Park and Ride Lots*; New "In the Loop" section points to timely news and headlines, the latest reports on current projects and great deals on hot tickets and venues. Mouse over any of these items to catch a surprise image that corresponds to the link.
- *Metro Store* is added to the navigation tabs on top.
- Fun trivia and factoids about Metro rotate constantly throughout the day.
- A quick button provides easy access to the *Transportation Library and Archives*, an invaluable resource for the public.

in terms of the customer – to make it easier for the customer to take advantage of the Metro system,” Rocha said.



Pictured: Joe Simpson, Christian Rocha, Vivian Tran, Omark Holmes

Metro.net Credit Roll

Project Management:
Vivian Tran

**Information
Architecture:** Christian
Rocha, Vivian Tran, Joe
Simpson, Omark Holmes

**Content and
Copywriting:** Vivian Tran

Art Direction: Christian
Rocha

Design: Christian Rocha
and Alex Cerilla

Development/Coding:
Joe Simpson, Kevin Woo,
Christian Rocha

The How to Ride section takes center stage – below the robust banner ads and next to the popular Trip Planner – to offer online users instant access to bus and rail routes, timetables, maps, passes, rider guides, and commuter services such as vanpool and carpool. Color-coded buttons call attention to information about service delays, real-time traffic and email sign-ups for updates.

Webmaster Joe Simpson, who helped develop the new homepage, said the visual design is a friendly approach to the metro.net experience. The web team worked with Systems Technician Doug Anderson to reduce the size of the Trip Planner, which opened up more space on the homepage.

“It’s more graphically based. It has a lot of rollovers, which means that when you roll over a part of the page with your mouse, something happens,” said Simpson, who added that the last metro.net redesign was almost six years ago.

The dynamic new homepage also will change and rotate its color banner, images and select information throughout the day.

The homepage makeover is the first in a series of ongoing changes to metro.net in an effort to cultivate a new relationship with Metro customers and online visitors.

“The idea is that every time you visit metro.net, there’s something new and different on the homepage that keeps you coming back,” Tran said.

• Photo by Ned Racine


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Services Pending for Richard Au, 28-Year Metro Employee

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 16, 2008) Memorial services are pending for Richard Au, an equipment maintenance instructor for Central Instruction—Maintenance, who died at Whittier Hospital Medical Center on Saturday, July 12.

Au, who began working for Metro in August 1980, died on his birthday. He was 66.

Au suffered a stroke in March 2008 and was moved to Whittier Hospital July 10 after suffering respiratory problems. Steve Mullaly, senior equipment maintenance instructor, visited Au the day he died. Au wanted to thank Metro employees for their support, according to Mullaly.

"He will certainly not be replaced, but he will be remembered. He was a well-loved guy," said Mullaly, who added that Au taught engine maintenance at Citrus College in Glendora. At Metro, Au's specialty was engine diagnostics. "He loved to share information and make everyone better."

"He was someone I could rely on to do any training," Mullaly said. "He not only knew engines, he knew coaches." Mullaly remembers Au eagerly shared his maintenance secrets with bus operators.

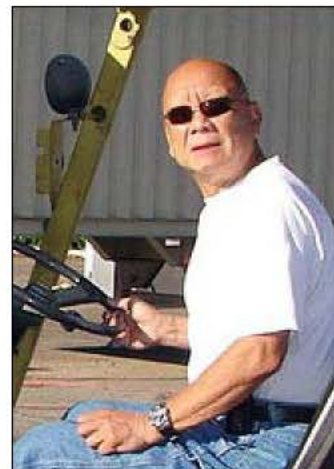
Chester Clark, mechanic "A," West Hollywood Division 7 and Au's nephew, remembers his uncle as someone who always tried to help people. Au, in fact, is the reason Clark came to work for the agency.

"He said, 'Hey, Kid, what are you doing with your life? Come to RTD—learn something and make a little money,'" Clark reminisced. He has now worked at Metro for 25 years.

"I don't think he met anyone he didn't try to help," said Clark laughing. He recalls his uncle's weekend 50-mile bicycle rides and love of country music.

Au, a resident of Downey, is survived by his wife Barbara, as well as a sister and brother.

"If ever there was a 'Tim the Tool Man' here at Metro, Richard would have been that man, as he owned every tool imaginable to make engine repair and troubleshooting defects easier," said Mullaly.



Richard Au

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California Office of Homeland Security (OHS) Director Matthew Bettenhausen (from left), Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, Metro CEO Roger Snoble and Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau Commander Dan Finkelstein each spoke about the importance of the OHS dispersal of \$16.1 million to Metro. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the "giant" check. *Photo by Dave Sotero*

Metro Granted County Homeland Security Funds

(July 16, 2008) More than \$16 million was given to Metro by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS), July 15, as part of a dispersal of funds to increase mass transit security statewide.

At an event attended by Metro CEO Roger Snoble and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, California Homeland Security Director Matthew Bettenhausen said transit security was an important issue at all levels of government.

"These funds will not only help Metro with the challenges of keeping area residents safe, they will also help protect our investment in the infrastructure, which is crucial to keeping our economy strong," Bettenhausen said.

The money was awarded to help fund the implementation of a gating system on Metro's Red and Purple lines and on some select light rail stops. The Metro Board approved the gate project in February.

The 10-year lease contract for installation and maintenance of the gates, expected to cost \$46 million, went to Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. The gates are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and should be installed within two years.

Primarily a weapon to combat fare evasion, the 379 fare gates should reduce the number of civilian fare inspectors needed to patrol those areas. The gates are expected to contribute to security by allowing sworn law enforcement officers to return to their jobs serving and protecting—rather than dealing with fare evasion.

“Commuters should never have to fear for their safety while traveling to work or trying to get home each day,” Villaraigosa said. “This funding will be a key component in ensuring safe commutes for local residents and making Metro a model for transit security nationwide.”

The \$16.1 million was part of \$60 million of the current state budget set aside to fulfill the voter-approved Proposition 1B, which passed in November 2006.

-- Dave Sotero and Rick Jager contributed to this report

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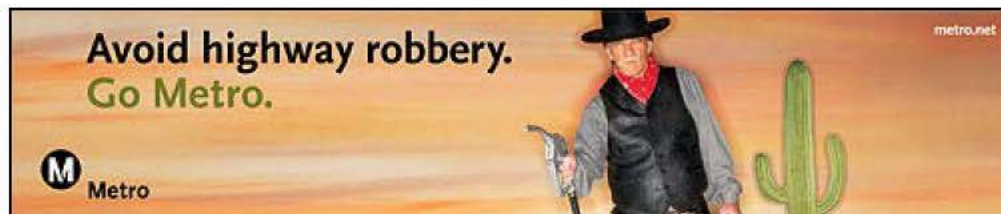
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Based on June's ridership numbers, commuters appear to be embracing Metro's message.

Metro Rail, Metro Orange Line Set New Ridership Records in June 2008

- Bus ridership grows from last quarter

(July 17, 2008) The Metro Red and Purple subway lines, the Metro Gold and Green lines all set weekday ridership records in June 2008, and the Metro Blue Line fell just short of a record as riders flocked to public transportation to avoid high gas prices.

Metro Orange Line buses also set a ridership record.

Last month 309,000 passengers boarded Metro Rail trains on an average weekday, up 12.8 percent when compared to June 2007. About half of those riders (153,928) rode the subway.

Metro bus ridership, which had been lagging following last summer's fare hike, bounced back. It's still down 1.96 percent for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2008 compared to last year, but it had been down as much as 7 percent in previous quarters.

"The increase in prices has changed travel behavior in two ways," said Ed Muncy, director of service planning. "One is riders are substituting transit for car trips. Two, they are organizing their trips better to consolidate their errands, whether they take cars or transit."

For the second month in a row, the Metro Gold Line between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena set a new ridership record with 26,338 average weekday boardings, up 31.8 percent this year over last year.

"The cost-effective, convenient alternative to driving propelled the Gold Line to an all-time high in ridership," said County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Michael D. Antonovich.

The Metro Green Line connecting Norwalk and El Segundo nabbed a record with 44,034 boardings. The Metro Blue Line, which travels between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach, experienced its second highest ridership with 84,353 average weekday boardings.

The popular Metro Orange Line, operating between North Hollywood and Woodland Hills in the San Fernando Valley, boosted weekday ridership by 4.4 percent over last year, reaching 26,596 boardings.

An even better measure of Metro Rail's growing popularity is to compare total boardings for the fourth quarter of FY 2008 (April-May-June) with the fourth quarter of FY 2007. Metro Rail ridership surged 7.13 percent.

Metro schedulers observe that a sharp drop in Metro Day Pass sales has resulted in bus riders making fewer extra discretionary trips, however, Metro Rail has consistently gained new commuter riders.

Combined Metro Bus and Rail ridership was just about even in the fourth quarter compared to a year earlier.

-- Marc Littman contributed to this report

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A weekend celebration in July 1996 welcomed the Wilshire Red Line Extension—and the Wilshire/Western station—to the growing subway.

Happy 12th Birthday to a Pillar of the Metro System

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 17, 2008) Braving the July heat, an estimated 85,000 people came to celebrate its arrival, in part drawn by free fares and the newness of Los Angeles County rail transit.



This week the Wilshire Red Line Extension—its name in July 1996—turns 12. Open to the public for free rides on July 13 and 14, the new segment began revenue operations on Monday, July 15.

Now, part of the Purple Line, the three Wilshire subway stations – Wilshire/Vermont, Wilshire/Normandie and Wilshire/Western—form a 17.4-mile underground system that features more than 150,000 boardings each weekday.

And, since their opening, the three stations have totaled almost 92 million boardings. How large a number is that? That's approximately the population of California, Texas, New York and Illinois combined.

But in 1996, the opening of the Wilshire Red Line Extension—then the largest public works program in the Western United States—was big news, and Red Line doubters were vocal.

The public still wanted to see it. Potential riders gathered at 5:30 a.m. on

Saturday, July 13 at the Wilshire-Western station, even though rides were offered until 11:30 p.m.

"There were throngs of people; it was standing room only," recalls Fran Curbello, communications manager, who has organized each opening of a Metro line since the Blue Line in 1990. They really enjoyed it. I think trains were so new to people, I think they saw it as an amusement park ride."

Bruce Shelburne, then a schedule planner, remembers the trains running smoothly on their 13-minute round trips, perhaps because the opening had been planned for a year.

"It was another piece in laying the foundation of a first-class transit rail system," said Shelburne, Rail Division Transportation Manager.

Besides adding three stations to the Red Line and adding 50 percent to its length, the new segment added 6,000 daily boardings to the subway, even within a week of its opening.

The segment took \$578 million and five years to build and opened three years after the initial segment of the Red Line began moving people in 1993.

What did Curbello hear most often from the riders that weekend? "This is a great adventure."

With the opening of the Wilshire Red Line Extension, Metro raised the subway fare from a quarter to \$1.35.

In a sign of things to come, four days before the Wilshire Red Line Extension opened, the Los Angeles Times reported that a Pacific Palisades group planned a demonstration to persuade the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to study extending the Red Line subway along Wilshire Boulevard past the Wilshire-Western station.

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TSB Deputy Sheriff Morsi catalogues the graffiti evidence taken out of "Splat's" bedroom, including cans of spray paint, permanent markers, slap tags with his crew (2FK) written on them, piece books and a DVD glorifying the gangster lifestyle. *Photos by Jimmy Stroup*

Videotaping Taggers Getting Unwanted Attention

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 17, 2008) Transit Services Bureau (TSB) deputies have been catching taggers left and right lately, in part thanks to the taggers themselves.

In a thirst for notoriety, some taggers now videotape themselves in the act of committing criminal acts. The latest stunt for graffiti "artists" is to record themselves tagging public property and then posting the recording on sites such as YouTube.com. ([Click here](#) to see tagger video.)

Sgt. Augie Pando said the posted videos are only the latest way taggers and want-to-be gangsters are promoting the gang lifestyle.

"They create these bootleg videos that literally teach young kids how to live like a gangster, what you have to do to fit it," he said. "This is the message [some kids] pay attention to. These are their role models."

Such a DVD was removed from "Splat's" home – along with tagging gear. "Splat," a 17-year-old suspect who was served a warrant, July 16, by TSB deputies,



TSB Deputy Sean Sullins points out a "Splat" tag on the sidewalk in front of his suspect's house.

was charged with tagging Metro property and causing damages nearing \$25,000.

Deputies also found "Splat" tagged his neighborhood, as well as crew tags from the tagging gang "Splat" is supposedly a member of: 2FK.

Deputy Sean Sullins investigated the crime with his partner Kyle Ynclan after the suspect's moniker was found tagged on the Bixby sound wall, which runs along the Blue Line near where it crosses the 405 (San Diego) freeway.

"[The wall is] made of a special material that helps control the sound and when taggers tag it up, it degrades the quality of the wall . . . sound is reflected and not absorbed," Sullins said. "This wall cost \$2 million to put up and now a piece of it will have to be replaced. That's not going to be cheap to fix."

Media followed "Splat" arrest

A Fox News Channel reporter and cameraman accompanied deputies to "Splat's" warrant service, hoping to gather footage to help them cover an original angle of the tagger story that an ABC World News story covered in late May.

In the May story, ABC News reported on the arrest of "Buket," also a tagger arrested by TSB deputies for destruction of Metro property. "Buket" was an especially juicy target for the TSB because he had brazenly taped himself tagging a Metro bus in broad daylight and posted the event.

He also gained some notoriety for tagging a freeway overpass – all on tape. That video was viewed more than 150,000 times.

Deputies said that while Internet postings are helpful in investigating the crimes, they're most useful as visual evidence that is difficult to dispute – especially because taggers are posting it themselves.

To see the ABC report detailing "Buket" and his tete-a-tete with Los Angeles law enforcement, watch the video below. About halfway through, you can see "Buket" deface a Metro bus while people walk by.

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Transit Services Bureau reserve Deputy [REDACTED] and K-9 partner Ieka are trained to detect explosives. Photo by Ned Racine

Reserve Deputy's Second Career Goes to the Dogs

By SARAH WINFREY

(July 22, 2008) For Reserve Deputy [REDACTED] each day brings new challenges, late Tuesday morning at Gateway Plaza was an example.

First responders to an unattended package on Vignes Street, adjoining the Gateway Tower, [REDACTED] and his partner investigated the package. In this environment, [REDACTED] Czech-speaking partner, Ieka, shines.

[REDACTED] has worked with the Transit Services Bureau (TSB) for two years. That works out to an income of about \$2.

"I took the test in 1992 because I wanted to go on as full-time [deputy]," says [REDACTED] describing how he became to be a reserve deputy, "but there was a hiring freeze, and I decided to go into business for myself."

He did well enough to pursue his dream of becoming a deputy sheriff. Now, a 17-year veteran, he volunteers an average of 170 hours each month.

This just in...



A suspicious black bag on Vignes Street, approximately 50 south of Cesar Chavez Avenue, brought out Metro Security, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles Police Department, late Tuesday

█████ has achieved the highest rank that a Reserve Deputy Sheriff can reach: Level I Dedicated. This rank allows him to carry his peace officer status even when off duty.

All full-time deputies hold this privilege, but only the reserve deputies with the Level I Dedicated rank have this right.

█████ underwent the same rigors that other full-time peace officers must undergo. He graduated from the Sheriffs Department Reserve Academy and now completes yearly field tests and training.

"I always wanted to get into K-9 explosives," says █████ "It's more challenging and isn't easy. This unit is very difficult to get into."

To work with his partner of two years, █████ had to learn a new language, Czech. That's because his partner is a Czech-born sable German shepherd canine, Ieka. █████ is the only reserve deputy to have the privilege of working with a canine partner.

To earn this honor, █████ underwent five months of special training at the Adlerhorst Police Dog Academy in Riverside.



On alert at Union Station, the crime-fighting duo patrol the premises.
Photo by Sarah Winfrey

morning.

No explosive was found in the bag.

According to Jack Eckles, DEO, System Safety & Security, the black canvas bag was chained to a tree adjoining Gateway Plaza. Law enforcement officials closed Vignes Street between the 101 (Hollywood) Freeway and Cesar Chavez Avenue and closed parts of Cesar Chavez Avenue as well.

The closure began at 11:05 a.m. and lasted approximately 45 minutes. The Gateway Child Care Center was evacuated and the northeast corner of the Gateway Plaza was cordoned off.

Upon graduating, █████ and Ieka went to work patrolling all Metro rail lines focusing on the Red Line.

There are three categories that canines and their handlers can train in: explosives, narcotics and patrol. Ieka is trained to alert on explosives.

When patrolling, █████ notices a change of behavior once Ieka picks up a possible explosive scent and will start leading him to the location of the scent. If Ieka alerts to a scent, she is trained to detect, she signals █████ with a passive response. Ieka's passive response is sitting and staring at █████

"They [the Sheriffs Department] have asked if I want to go on as a full-time officer, but I am happy where I am as a Reserve Deputy," explains █████

At home, Ieka is just like █████ two other German shepherds. She goes for hikes, lies in the sun and works out on her treadmill—if █████ watches her. If he doesn't, she's content to stop and rest.

"When she gets out of the patrol car, she is ready to work," █████ says. "But, at home she's the boss."

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Professor Ron Drewes, bus operators Ingrid Alvarez, Gilda Garcia, Manvir Sohal and Erik Cuchilla; Division Steno Darlene Blake; Bus Operator Victor Nunez; TOS Ethel Fields, TOS M.D. Johnson

Innovative TOS Brings College-Level Classes to Division 15

By DARLENE BLAKE

(July 22, 2007) When M.D. Johnson noticed the time East Valley Division 15 bus operators spent between assignments, he imagined a more beneficial use of that time. So he brought college to Division 15.

On July 7, the division saw concrete results from Johnson's innovation and determination as 18 students completed a developmental communications course, which focused on reading comprehension, vocabulary, language, and study skills. This class was selected because it is a college level/entry level course that seemed appropriate for the majority of the students.

"He was the initiator of the program," said Gary Spivack, division transportation manager, of Johnson. "He put us in contact with people. I gave him the air of authority [but] he deserves the credit."

Johnson, a transit operations supervisor (TOS), also functioned as liaison between San Fernando Mission College, Professor Ronald Drewes and Metro.

Bringing a college level course to an outside facility was a first for Mission College and Division 15. To do so, new ideas and innovative procedures had to be implemented in order to accommodate employees who work tight, variable and extended schedules – and IT WORKED!!!

Johnson administered tests to students unable to attend class on test day, collected homework and accounted for lab materials.

Professor Drewes went to great lengths to coordinate the class schedules with the irregular work schedules of his students. Bus Operator Byron Thompson, one of those students, said "The teacher really worked with us. Professor Drewes made every effort to accommodate our schedules and still cover all the required material."

All classes were video taped to be viewed by students who missed all or any portion of any class.

Returning to a formal classroom setting after so many years away made some students apprehensive.

"Professor Drewes helped us make that transition," said Bus Operator Miriam Pereira. "He opened our minds to acceptance of our learning potential and taught us techniques to make the most effective use of our study time."

Other students praised the convenience of the class and their ability to attend without incurring additional gasoline costs.

Spivack appreciated Johnson's innovation because it fit with his own effort to change the way employees see Division 15. "I want people to want to work here and come to the division for other things than work."

Division 15 is now gearing up for the next class, beginning September 2. That class, English 22, is an introductory class focusing on grammar as it relates to writing and other communication skills.

English 22 classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 to 11:30 a.m. For additional information contact Johnson at 818-394-2640.

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Saturday Services Planned for Richard Au, Maintenance Instructor

- Services will be held Saturday, July 26, at 10 a.m.

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 22, 2008) Memorial services will be held Saturday, July 26, for Richard Au, an equipment maintenance instructor for Central Instruction-Maintenance, who died Saturday, July 12.

Au, who began working for Metro in August 1980, died on his birthday. He was 66.

A viewing will be held on Friday, July 25, from noon to 7 p.m. at the Simpson Family Mortuary, Chapel of Roses, 3443 West Manchester Drive, Inglewood, CA 90305 (323.752.5524).

Services will be held the next day, Saturday, July 26, at 10 a.m. Burial at Inglewood Park Cemetery will immediately follow the services.

Au suffered a stroke in March 2008 and was moved to Whittier Hospital July 10 after suffering respiratory problems. Steve Mullaly, senior equipment maintenance instructor, visited Au the day he died. Au wanted to thank Metro employees for their support, according to Mullaly.

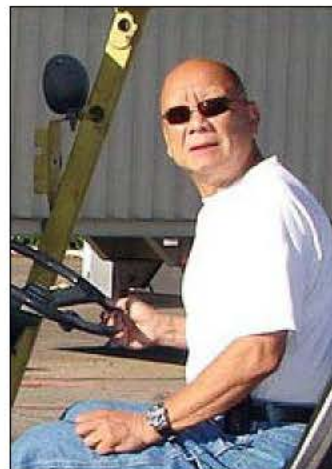
"He will certainly not be replaced, but he will be remembered," Mullaly reflected. "He was a well-loved guy," said Mullaly, who added that Au taught engine maintenance at Citrus College in Glendora. At Metro, Au's specialty was engine diagnostics. "He loved to share information and make every one better."

"He was someone I could rely on to do any training," Mullaly said. "He not only knew engines, he knew coaches." Mullaly remembers Au eagerly shared his maintenance secrets with bus operators.

Chester Clark, mechanic "A," West Hollywood Division 7 and Au's nephew, remembers his uncle as someone who always tried to help people. Au, in fact, is the reason Clark came to work for the agency.

"He said, 'Hey, Kid, what are you doing with your life? Come to RTD—learn something and make a little money,'" Clark said. He has now worked at Metro for 25 years.

"I don't think he met anyone he didn't try to help," said Clark laughing. He recalls his uncle's weekend 50-mile bicycle rides and love of Country music.



Richard Au

Au, a resident of Downey, is survived by his wife Barbara, as well as a sister and brother.

"If ever there was a 'Tim the Tool Man' here at Metro, Richard would have been that man, as he owned every tool imaginable to make engine repair and troubleshooting defects easier," said Mullaly.

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Kelly Patton and her staff answer approximately 100 help calls a day, not including walk-in customers. Pictured are, from left, Bonita Martin, network support analyst; Patricia Clark, word processor operator; Maxine Drummond, network support analyst; Beverley Davenport-Waldon, network support analyst; Robert Eakins, network support analyst, and Kelly Patton, network support supervisor.

Photo by Ned Racine

Deliverer of Bad News Really a Nice Person. Really.

- Kelly Patton manages the ITS Help Desk with calm humor

By Ned Racine, Editor

(July 23, 2008) For someone who delivers so much bad news, Kelly Patton, network support supervisor, seems to be a nice person.

She sends birthday cards to her parents in Florida and calls them every couple of days. She insists she's nice to her husband, and she recently devoted a weekend to moving her two daughters (24 and 21) into their first apartment.

But when email is down or needs to be purged, when the network catches a bug or a computer application becomes sick, it's Patton who delivers the bad news.

"I'm the mailman," she said. "I'm the grim reaper."

Since Patton completed her work helping build the Gateway Tower—when ITS asked her to leave General Services and join it—Patton has worked on Metro's ITS Help Desk. "They're both very customer service oriented, so it was very easy," she said of that transition 12 years ago.

Patton's five-person Help Desk crew services approximately 3,200 computers, not including the Blackberry devices. She praises the technicians who work to solve those computer problems. "They try really hard. Our technicians are magicians—[considering] the things they have to know and the different pieces that people have."

In fact, the biggest caller misconception she finds when answering the Help Desk line (2-4357 or 2-HELP) is that "we have techs just standing by ready to go out."

Patton's crew also handles cell phones and pagers, including the return of damaged devices.

"We've had pagers coming back with dog's teeth on them," she said, also recalling cell phones that have been dropped in swimming pools and glasses of orange juice or run over by a bus. Many have been dropped in the toilet. "When I hear that, I don't touch them. I like them to be in a plastic bag."

Having the Help Desk deliver bad news has two advantages, according to Patton. "Every body knows the Help Desk. And if people have a question, they have one central place to call."

When something does go awry, the Help Desk is usually the first to know because it receives calls from users. "I would say. . . 99 percent of the time the Help Desk knows first, from the users," she said. "All the lines light up. Then you know something's wrong."

When a system does go down, she typically receives the same questions: When will it be back up? How can I do my work without it? "There are workarounds, but we are such an instantaneous society now, " she said. "So people are used to being very fast with sending and receiving. People have withdrawal."

The subject of many of Patton's emails, the classic "E-mail Deletion" messages, enforce agency policy that email is not held longer than 30 days. She sends that email every 30 days, in part to prune old files living on Metro's email computers.

What's changed in 12 years? Kelly said the Help Desk handles more devices, with more users and more systems. Balancing that, Patton believes ITS has better, faster equipment.

"The users are more savvy now," she said. "They know more programs and they know more ins and outs. Sometimes they will ask you a question and you're thinking, 'What?' "

Patton is continually surprised that Metro's savvy computer users still fall for emails promising dubious offers, "That they really believe Honda will send you \$75."

She does get some cranky calls. "But if the system is down there is really nothing you can do until it's brought back up," she said. She does try to be polite and nice (there's that word again).

And she receives some bizarre calls. "We have had people call and say their ATM card doesn't work," she said. "People have called to say ' My cup holder (CD drive) doesn't hold my cup anymore. Because it's called the Help Desk, employees have called Patton's crew and asked where they could find toilet paper.

Robert Eakins, network support analyst, answers the Help Desk line, as do Patricia Clark, word processor operator, and Beverley Davenport-Waldon, network support analyst. Maxine Drummond and Benita Martin, network support analysts, also support the Help Desk.

Even with its frustrations, Patton enjoys her work. "It's fun almost every day," she said. "We have a good group of people at the Help Desk. We laugh a lot . . . a lot, because that is all you can do sometimes."

"You never know what's coming on that [next] phone call," she said.
"You'll get someone who you'll do the simplest little thing for and they're so grateful. It makes everything OK."

Even working with good people and enjoying her job, Patton avoids both the telephone and computer when she arrives home on weekdays. "I'm done," she said.

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C. Arturo López Molina, president of an organization of the Mexican government that aids those with physical limitations, tours Metro's ADA-compliant bus and rail service July 21. Photos by Ned Racine

Mexican Disability Official Tours ADA Features of Metro Vehicles

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 23, 2008) Metro demonstrated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) features of its vehicles on July 21 as C. Arturo López Molina, president of the Asociación Limitados Físicos de Colima, A.C., toured Metro buses and the Red Line.

Molina's organization, part of the Mexican government, aids the physically handicapped. He sought to become more familiar with accessibility issues in the United States as he develops standards for his organization.

Besides acquiring equipment, Molina's main goal was to discover technology that could be adapted to his country's buses. Molina chose Metro because he had visited Los Angeles before and because he was familiar with the agency.

Molina explained to Metro staff that he was interested in more than the latest technology. He was also interested in how the technology evolved.

Richard Rivers, Division 18 bus operator, gave Molina his first demonstration of Metro technology as he demonstrated the ramp that makes access easier on the NABI articulated bus.

Guiding Molina on the tour was Chip Hazen, ADA compliance administrator; Roman Alarcon, director of Bus and Rail Operations Control; Jeannette Mayo, transit operations supervisor (TOS); Leonard Hooper, TOS, and Agustin Moreno, scheduling system project leader.

Responding to Molina's questions, Alarcon described the automatic voice annunciator that calls out each upcoming stop. At Molino's request,



Richard Rivers, Division 18 bus operator, secures C. Arturo López Molina's wheelchair in a NABI articulated bus.

Hooper secured and released his wheelchair with the anchoring equipment on a Neoplan CNG bus.

Through a translator, Hooper told Molina that bus operators are trained to stop in an unobstructed area when there is a person with disabilities on board. He also explained bus operators are trained to have the person with disabilities board first and alight last.

Hazen explained the scrolling screen at the front of Metro buses and how they aid deaf passengers. Hooper demonstrated the Advanced Transportation Management System, which allows an operator to let the

bus dispatcher know he or she has a person with a wheelchair on board who will be waiting on a connecting bus.

Molina was particularly interested in the elevating ramp found on the Neoplan bus, asking how the ramp adjusted to varying street and curb heights.


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While Orange Line Sets Ridership Records, Division 8 Sets Safety Record

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 24, 2008) While the Metro Orange Line was setting records for weekday ridership, West Valley Division 8 operators set a record for safety.



The popular Orange Line boosted weekday ridership by 4.4 percent over last year, reaching 26,596 boardings. Division 8 completed Fiscal Year 2008 with fewer than two bus traffic accidents per 100,000 hub miles.

"Based on my research and conversation with long-time Metro safety officers, no accident data can be found to show that an accident rate below 2.0 has ever been achieved by a Metro bus division," said David Miklic, senior safety specialist. "The agency rate for the past year was 3.47."

Maria Reynolds, Division 8 Transportation Manager, credits the teamwork between operators and staff for the success.

"This could not have been possible without the hard work and efforts of our bus operating personnel," she said. "A celebration lunch is being planned for everyone who contributed to the success."

Last July, when the fiscal year began, no one considered that an accident rate below 2.0 was attainable, but by May 2008 it seemed a realistic goal, and the accident counts were being watched closely.

Even in early July, the final outcome was uncertain. The division knew how many accidents had occurred, but until the hub miles had been tallied, the accident rate couldn't be calculated accurately. But when the Service Performance Analysis Department's June Monthly Managers' Report was distributed on July 14, it showed that the division's year-to-date accident rate was 1.99.

The goal had been reached. So has a remarkable year-to-year reduction in the accident rate.

"The accident rate for Fiscal Year 2007 was 2.46, so the Fiscal Year 2008 rate of 1.99 is an amazing 19 percent reduction," Miklic said. "That translates to 57 fewer accidents in just one year. The Division 8 rate last fiscal year was already one third less than the Metro average.

Miklic is already setting a challenge for next year: "The professionalism of the Division 8 operators has been shown. There is no reason we can't improve further in Fiscal Year 2009. Two fewer accidents each month is a reasonable goal."

"A properly trained, experienced operator with a genuine interest in driving defensively is the single most important element in avoiding traffic

collisions,” Miklic added.

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Official Metro Gold Line train piloted by Operator Ruben Ramirez breaks through the banner at Union Station to mark the dedication of the 13.7-mile light rail line to Pasadena on July 25, 2003. Photo by John Weiskopf

Gold Line Marks Its Fifth Anniversary as It Sets Ridership Record

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 24, 2008) Time passes quickly when you're moving millions of riders.

Saturday, July 26 marks the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Metro Gold Line. The nearly 14-mile line was hailed as a historic return of a rail corridor idled for more than 50 years when it opened on July 26, 2003. The last electric trains -- the Pacific Electric "Red Cars" that traveled along the same alignment to Pasadena -- ended in the 1950s.



Metro CEO Roger Snoble and Chief Capital Management Officer Rick Thorpe, then chief executive officer for the Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Construction Authority, above, were among the officials who lined the stage at Union Station for dedication ceremonies.

The route had been used by Amtrak and Santa Fe railroad for passengers and freight later, but Amtrak passenger service ended in 1994.

Joining downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena, the Metro Gold Line has become increasingly popular—ridership is up 31.8 percent this year over last year.

"The Metro Gold Line has taken its place as a critically important leg of the expanding Metro Rail System that serves the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley areas," said Mayor and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa. "I look forward to the continued expansion of Gold Line service to



its next destination of East Los Angeles."

In July 2003, anticipation of the line was feverish. The Gold Line has now had more than 27 million boardings, but the first train car—No. 232—carried just 37 passengers. They were train enthusiasts, and they left Union Station at 3:56 a.m. Saturday morning.

That kind of enthusiasm for the \$859-million project carried throughout the opening weekend. More than 160,000 boarding passengers took their first ride on the new line. At times people waited almost two hours to board the latest addition to the 73-mile Metro Rail system.

Metro Public Relations worked to build media buzz by staging several media events prior to the opening, and, in July 2003 alone, 350 stories and articles in print and broadcast touched on the Gold Line Opening. Newspapers were already writing how the new line would change urban planning in the area.

More than 160,000 boarding passengers packed Gold Line trains on opening weekend. *Juan Ocampo photos*



The launch of the rail line was celebrated at seven of the 12 Gold Line Station with unique public festivities from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hundreds of Metro employees wore gold t-shirts and directed riders to the new P2000 rail cars.



The weekend began with a VIP train bursting through a "Discover Gold" banner on Friday morning. Riding the train, and continuing the "gold" theme of the weekend, were several Olympic Gold Medal winners.

Bursting through the banner, planned smoke bombs were ignited, creating a gold cloud, recalled Fran Curbello, communications manager, who has organized each opening of a Metro line since the Blue Line in 1990. The cloud was not, however, as dramatic as Curbello had planned.



"You always have your drama behind the scene nobody hears about," Curbello said of the Gold Line opening. This was one of those times.

That Friday, the pyrotechnical expert responsible for the gold cloud

disappeared. While looking for her expert, Curbello passed two Sheriff's deputies. She heard one deputy mentioning to the other that they had detained a man after finding bombs in his suitcase. Curbello had found her expert.

Once released, Curbello's pyrotechnical expert could not place all the devices to complete the dramatic smoke effect. The train still broke through the banner, but a spectacular moment was compromised.



The inaugural train seems to disappear in a cloud of gold smoke right before it broke through the banner. *Photo by Juan Ocampo*

Particularly important that weekend was Metro's goal of encouraging attendees to sample the communities along the new line. Curbello wanted to negate any rider thoughts of "I don't want to get off there. I don't know that community."

The Gold Line is now headed east with a six-mile light rail extension to East Los Angeles, scheduled to open next year. Estimated to take 17 minutes to ride between Union Station and the new terminus at Atlantic Station, the line will have eight total new stations.

"The Gold Line is fulfilling its promise as a frequent transit service of choice for cost-conscious commuters," said John Fasana, Metro Board Member and Duarte City Council Member.


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Metro Board Acts to Put New Transportation Sales Tax on November Ballot

By RICK JAGER

(July 24, 2008) The Metro Board of Directors today took a critical step in placing on the November ballot a new half cent sales tax measure for Los Angeles County that would finance dozens of transportation projects from fixing potholes to major highway construction, buying clean fueled buses and building new rail lines spread throughout the county in a concerted effort to keep pace with major population and job growth.

Metro directors approved an ordinance including an [expenditure plan](#) that spells out in project detail how the sales tax – estimated to generate \$40 billion over 30 years – would be spent. These monies also could be leveraged with state, federal and private sector funding. The Metro Board also passed a resolution formally requesting the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to place the ordinance on the ballot for the Nov. 4, 2008 countywide general election. If the measure garners at least a two thirds vote, it would become law in January.

The ballot measure also is contingent on passage of state legislation, AB 2321 (Feuer), which would give Los Angeles County authority to levy the tax if voters approve it.

The new sales tax would fund an aggressive attack on gridlock in the nation's most traffic-choked region. It would finance such new transit projects as the Foothill Extension of the Metro Gold Line, a subway extension and Expo light rail line on the Westside, a rail connection to LAX, extending the Metro Green Line to the South Bay corridor, a downtown rail connector that would make transfers on the light rail lines seamless, an extension of the popular Metro Orange Line busway to Chatsworth and much more. Major highway projects such as adding capacity to the I-5 from the I-605 to the Orange County Line also would be funded.

In addition, the 88 cities and county unincorporated areas would receive 15 percent of sales tax revenue for local transit services, street resurfacing, left hand turn signals, bikeways, pedestrian improvements and other local transportation priorities.

Twenty percent of the monies would help subsidize countywide bus operations, which will help keep fares low for seniors, students and commuters. Another 5 percent will pay for Metrolink operations, maintenance and expansion and for purchasing Metro Rail train cars, rail yards and other system improvements.

To ensure that money will be spent in Los Angeles County for exactly what voters were promised, the ballot measure calls for an annual independent audit and report to taxpayers and ongoing monitoring and review of spending by an independent taxpayer oversight committee.

The private nonprofit Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) estimates the sales tax would jump start the regional economy. Construction of new highway and transit projects would generate \$32 billion in local economic activity and create employment equivalent to 210,000 full-time, year-long jobs spread over a 30-year construction period.

The LAEDC also found that the tax increase would cost residents just \$25 more per person annually. Residents will pay about 42 percent of the sales tax raised with businesses and tourists footing the rest of the bill. In contrast, the American Automobile Association and the TRIP transportation research group estimate that traffic congestion costs county residents more than \$2,000 per person a year for wasted fuel, lost productivity and sales and other costs.

Once the measure is placed on the November ballot, Metro will develop and mail to 3.3 million households a voter information packet that details every aspect of the transportation sales tax measure.

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Private Services for Paul Stanley, Warranty Equipment Mechanic, Racing Fan

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 29, 2008) Long-time employee Paul Stanley died on July 21 after a short battle with cancer. He was 65.

Stanley, a warranty equipment mechanic in the Central Warehouse's Quality Receiving Unit, retired July 12 when he learned the extent of his illness.

Stanley joined the Southern California Rapid Transit District, Metro's predecessor agency, in December 1980. Dieter Hemsing, Director of Inventory Management, explained that Stanley, a warranty equipment mechanic since 1989, was involved in the initial testing and evaluation of both methanol and CNG power-plant technologies, as well as working in the emissions lab.



Paul Stanley stands beside his last race car, the appropriately named Stanley Machine, at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats in 2005. This type of car is called a "streamline."

Co-worker Louie Knutson shared Stanley's love of building cars and dry lake racing. According to Knutson, Stanley's favorite venues were Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats and El Mirage Dry Lake in San Bernardino.

In fact, Stanley was a former president of the Southern California Timing Association, a volunteer group that supports land speed racing.

"We [would] collect old junk cars and build them up and see how fast they go," said Knutson, also a warranty equipment mechanic, who worked with Stanley for almost 30 years. "I know he'd been doing it all his life, either drag [racing] or racing on the El Mirage Dry Lake."

"He was a very wholesome guy," Knutson remembers. "If I needed something, he was the first one there."

Hemsing described Stanley as being well respected by his peers and

management alike. Hemsing appreciated Stanley's dedication and reliability.

Stanley is survived by his sister Gail Stanley, brother Gene and niece Galeen Row.

Services will be private. His ashes will be committed to Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats.

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Dianne Sirisut, communications coordinator, led the in-service training for the Metro interns on July 23.

Photos by Sarah Winfrey

Metro Interns Tour Busy Metrolink Central Maintenance Facility

By SARAH WINFREY

(July 29, 2008) Metro's interns had a treat, July 23, when the Organizational Development and Training (OD&T) Department held an in-service training for them. This one-day event encourages high school and college interns to learn more about the transportation industry.

"The purpose is to expose Metro interns to other areas of transportation," said Dianne Sirisut, OD&T communications coordinator.

Seventy-seven interns from every department gathered on the Gateway Tower's 4th floor to meet and greet each other before heading out to the day's piece-de-resistance, a tour of the Metrolink Central Maintenance Facility, where 32 trains arrive each day for maintenance.

Sirisut brought three of her department's interns to help manage the event: Tahira Sadiqa, Katie Talbert and Arianne Bulus.

Heading down to Track 6 in Union Station, the interns boarded a Metrolink train that would take them directly to the maintenance facility near Cypress Park. Riding slowly from Union Station and past Metro Gold Line Division 21, the interns heard Metrolink's Laurene Lopez speak of her career in transportation.

"I've been in government for my entire career," said Lopez, a community relations administrator, adding that her work was very challenging. "It's not about money if you follow what you want to do."

At the maintenance facility, every one disembarked the train and broke into two groups to tour that area. Metrolink Maintenance Manager Ron Svobobda



Metrolink Maintenance Manager Ron Svobobda explained to the Metro interns the techniques Metrolink uses to move

explained to the students the push-pull technique that Metrolink uses to move its trains.

its trains.

Carlos Perez, a manager of maintenance, noted that Metrolink hit a milestone in June, carrying 50,000 travelers in one day, and emphasized Metrolink's safety.

"Our trip to the Metrolink facility was great to learn about the equipment , mechanics and technology of the rail, which are things I could only think of abstractly before seeing it firsthand," said Isabelle Alford-Lago, Marketing Department intern.

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Board Approves Critical Step in Placing Half-Cent Sales Tax on Ballot

- Board requests County Supervisors place the ordinance on Nov. 2008 ballot

In this report:

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- [Item 24, On-Going and Expanded Big Rig Service Patrol](#)
- [Item 26, Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel Contract](#)
- [Item 35, Amendment to Congestion Reduction Demonstration](#)

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 29, 2008) In a historic vote on July 24, the Metro Board of Directors took a critical step in placing on the November ballot a new half-cent sales tax measure for Los Angeles County that would finance dozens of transportation projects.

The tax measure would also fix potholes, fund major highway construction, buy clean fueled buses and build new rail lines spread throughout the county in a concerted effort to keep pace with major population and job growth.

Metro directors approved an ordinance including an [expenditure plan](#) that details how the sales tax – estimated to generate \$40 billion over 30 years – would be spent. These monies also could be leveraged with state, federal and private sector funding.

The Board also passed a resolution formally requesting the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to place the ordinance on the ballot for the Nov. 4, 2008 countywide general election. If the measure garners at least a two-thirds vote, it would become law in January.

The ballot measure also is contingent on passage of state legislation, AB 2321 (Feuer), which would give Los Angeles County authority to levy the tax if voters approve it.

Item 7, Expansion of Metro Rapid Signal Priority.

The Board voted to award a contract to expand the Metro Rapid Signal Priority system. The professional services contract would total almost \$8

million.

This second phase of the Countywide Signal Priority (CSP) rollout will use wireless technology to support Metro Rapid operations along the Manchester, Garvey-Chavez and Atlantic corridors, eliminating gaps in the signal priority system.

The firm fixed-price contract would include designing, procuring and implementing signal priority for these final three Metro Rapid corridors requiring CSP technology.

Item 11, Memo of Understanding Among Three County Agencies.

The Board approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among Metro and the County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles Unified School District.

The MOU seeks to limit litigation against each other and improve the agencies' defenses against third-party claims. Metro staff believes the MOU would reduce administrative expenses, including legal costs. The staff also believes greater cooperation among the three agencies may reduce the costs of settlements and jury verdicts.

Item 17, Position on Current State Legislation.

The Board took a "support" position on SB 1626 (Cedillo). The bill would authorize a public-private partnership to construct the 710 Gap Closure project. The bill would authorize the imposition of tolls and specify a design/build procurement process for the project.

The 710 Gap Closure project would close the gap between Interstate 710 and Interstate 210.

The legislation would specifically give Caltrans the responsibility for preparing reports and documents to be used in preparing proposals to complete design, construction and operation of a tunnel joining the two interstate highways.

In consultation with Caltrans, Metro would determine whether the tunnel project should be developed as a design-build project or developed as part of an agreement between Metro and a private entity.

Item 18, Private Security Services Contract.

The Board authorized a five-year, \$24.3-million contract for private security contractor services, effective Sept. 2008.

Contracted private security already contributes to the agency security force, working with Metro Security and the Sheriff's Department.

Private security personnel are deployed at property and facilities throughout Metro's service area, including employee parking facilities, Metro Rail and bus system parking lots and support facilities.

The base contract runs three years, with two one-year options, totaling a potential contract length of five years.

Item 21, Contract for Safety Gloves.

Addressing the agency's appetite for safety gloves, the Board awarded a 36-month, firm fixed-price contract for slightly more than \$1 million spread among three firms.

Material Management will store the gloves, which previously had been

purchased on an as-needed basis. Metro staff believes awarding the contract will result in lower costs and the manufacturers' commitment to availability and price stability.

The contract includes a variety of gloves, including those referred to as glass handling gloves, blacksmith gloves and welding gloves.

Item 22, Integrate Eastside Extension into SCADA.

The Board approved a \$1.7 million contract to upgrade the existing Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) System to integrate the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Integrating the new light rail line, scheduled to open in 2009, would require additional computer hardware, updates to existing databases, additional functions and updates to documentation and training.

SCADA allows rail operations to be remotely supervised and controlled from a central location, including train movement and fire and gas detection.

Item 23, Purchase of 223 Bus Re-Power Kits.

To support the on-going Re-Power campaign to rejuvenate Metro New Flyer 5300 series buses, the Board approved a \$2 million contract.

The fixed-price contract will purchase 223 Re-Power kits. Each kit includes a wiring harness, hydraulic line, tubing and insulation systems. The components of each kit have been designed to fit within the engine compartment of the New Flyer Low Floor 5300 series.

Item 24, On-Going and Expanded Big Rig Service Patrol.

Transitioning the Big Rig Service Patrol from a demonstration project, the Board approved the Big Rig Service Patrol as an on-going operation and expanded the service onto the SR-91 freeway.

The Big Rig Service Patrol's three-year demonstration project began in October 2005. The Board later authorized the demonstration until June 30, 2009. Metro staff sought Board action so an on-going project can be readied for a start date of July 1, 2009 or earlier.

Evaluation of the Big Rig Service Patrol finds a benefit-to-cost ratio comparable to the entire Metro Freeway Service Patrol program. As of April 2008, the Big Rig Service Patrol has logged 7,276 assists.

Item 26, Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel Contract.

On the recommendation of the Operations Committee, the Board awarded a 36-month, adjustable rate contract for ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel.

Metro uses the fuel for operation of its fleet of 108 diesel buses and 90 non-revenue vehicles using diesel fuel.

Although Metro has been gradually retiring diesel buses since Fiscal Year 2007, some diesel buses will remain in service for the next few years. Metro staff anticipates the agency using approximately 2.0 million gallons of the fuel in Fiscal Year 2009 and approximately 1.0 million gallons in Fiscal Year 10.

Item 35, Amendment to Congestion Reduction Demonstration.

The Board authorized the CEO to amend the existing congestion reduction

demonstration memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Department of Transportation. The amended agreement would change the near-term focus of the high occupancy vehicle lanes to high occupancy toll lanes conversion and related transit improvements to interstates 10 and 110, rather than interstates 10 and 210.

--Rick Jager contributed to this report

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Rail Operations Slates In-house Training Program for RTOS Application Process

(July 30, 2008) In response to the growing demands of an expanding system, the Rail Transportation Department has developed a program, beginning Aug. 8, to aid applicants in the competitive selection process for promotion.

The Rail Transportation Promotional Opportunity Program (RTPOP) was created by a team that includes a director, a manager, two assistant managers and a rail transportation operations supervisor (RTOS).

Their initial focus was to start a recruitment program for the RTOS position and develop brochures and workshops to aid employees with the various stages of the application process.

"We wanted to take an active role in the future of Rail Operations by investing in our employees both current and future," said Duane Martin, Director of Rail Transportation/ Operations. "It is important that we let our employees know that we are a team and we care about their professional growth."

Workshops will focus on subjects that help produce a qualified, prepared applicant for an RTOS position. The initial workshops will help participants evaluate scenarios and articulate their actions through the critical thinking process.

"There's a huge advantage for employees who have been out of the interview/job search process for a time to participate in this workshop," Martin added. "Being comfortable and confident goes a long way in promoting one's self."

Participants will also benefit from other internal and external sources of information pertinent to Rail Operations.

Best from within

The team that developed the program is committed to seeing current Metro employees promote through the organization. Several of the committee members started out as operators themselves, so they're partial to the benefits of hiring from within.

Esther Pippins and Cristobal Medina, both RTOS's, will facilitate the August classes. Between them, Medina and Pippins have over 40 years of operational and supervisory experience.

RTPOP Workshops

The second RTPOP workshop is open to any Metro employee, whether a rail employee or not. It's scheduled for Friday, Aug. 8 from 8 a.m. to noon or 1 to 5 p.m., and Saturday, Aug. 9 from 7 to 11 a.m. or 12 to 4 p.m., held at Metro Red Line Division 20, room 224, 320 S. Santa Fe Ave., Los Angeles. Employees who are interested in participating on their own time should reserve a spot at one of the sessions by contacting Esther Pippins at 213.922.3213. Space is limited.

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Third Time Not the Charm for 19-Year-Old Arrested for Felony Vandalism

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 30, 2008). When Transit Services Bureau (TSB) deputies arrived at 7 a.m. to serve a warrant at a Wilshire District home, July 25, it was the third time they had visited the home.

When deputies left the home, they left with Ebbie Echeverria, arresting him for the second time for vandalism/graffiti. This time, Echeverria, 19, was taken into custody on suspicion of causing \$24,000 damage to Metro Red Line cars.

Echeverria, whose moniker is "SKUNK," was arrested on suspicion of felony vandalism in Nov. 2007. When convicted, he was ordered to pay \$18,000 in restitution and given three years' probation.

This latest charge is also felony vandalism. The suspect remains in custody in Men's Central Jail in lieu of \$160,000 bail.

According to TSB Deputy Allen Jacobs, investigators found etching tools, markers and slap tags at the suspect's home. Jacobs said the suspect was very apologetic and didn't want to return to jail.

In fact, according to Jacobs, when arrested July 25, the suspect told investigators he had stopped tagging. TSB investigators disagree. "To our knowledge, all the damage was after the first arrest," Jacobs said.

Jacobs noted that the SKUNK moniker was accompanied by increasingly costly damage, beginning with window etching and escalating to carving the fiberglass seats of Red Line cars.

Jacobs originally discovered the SKUNK moniker while patrolling the Red Line in January 2007.

Around the time Jacobs began investigating Red Line tagging by SKUNK, a TSB deputy patrolling the Blue Line cited a man for riding the light rail line



Sheriff's Deputy Allen Jacobs found the "SKUNK" moniker etched into Metro Red Line seats. Below, TSB deputies found this display in the suspect's bedroom.



without a ticket. The man was identified as Echeverria.

The Blue Line deputy noted the man wore a baseball cap with SKUNK lettered on it and had admitted he was a tagger.

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On the job: **Transit Security Officer Clocks in 35 Years**

< Transit Security Officer Tom Kraft in his element, the Gateway Tower loading dock.

Photos by Ned Racine

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 30, 2008). Tom Kraft, who marked his 35th year working for Metro this month, serves as a professional observer, an expert on truck geometry and an interpreter of mechanical sounds, all because of his seven years on the Gateway Tower loading dock.

Kraft, a security officer "I," is a man with a wry sense of humor and a frequently used laugh. He began working for RTD in 1973 and was part of the security team at Metro's former headquarters building at 1060 South Broadway.

For seven years, the Newark, New Jersey native has been the security presence and traffic controller of the loading dock, an expert on fitting a 28-foot-long truck into a frequently crowded space. "I sort of adopted it as a home," the Newhall resident said.

General
Services
Supervisor
Phyllis
Meng,
Tom Kraft
and
Transit
Security
Lt. Jim
Cook at a
ceremony
handing
Kraft his
35-year
Metro
Service
Pin.



Phyllis Meng, General Services Supervisor of Building Services, is very glad he did.

"Kraft is very efficient," Meng said. "He knows everything that goes on down here. He knows every piece of freight that comes in. He knows where all the deliveries are going. When he's not here, it becomes chaos."

To keep shipments moving smoothly, one wall of Kraft's tiny office overlooking the loading dock contains a white board stuffed with department telephone numbers—from Accounting to the Print Shop—so he can notify them when their shipments have arrived.

According to Kraft, the loading dock averages 10 deliveries a day, with the busiest time beginning at 6:30 a.m. When the loading dock is busy, it's noisy, with trucks setting their air brakes on Cesar Chavez Avenue before they enter under the loading dock's overhead door.

These include vault trucks dropping off cash and tokens. Other trucks deliver huge rolls of paper for the Print Shop and bring parts of escalators and elevators. Barrels of lubricants arrive and eventually move to the divisions.

Aramark delivers uniforms and takes rags from the print shop. The most time-consuming deliveries, according to Kraft, are deliveries of drinking water. Those trucks may sit in the loading dock for several hours.

When the Gateway Tower opened 12 years ago, Building Services originally had responsibility for the loading dock. "We quickly realized . . . we needed to have security down here because the loading dock was a place where people could get into the building," Meng said. She and Kraft have worked together, on and off, since 1995.

"I can look at a truck and tell you whether it will fit or not," Kraft said, noting he worries most a vehicle fitting under the 13-foot, 6-inch overhead door. In making his evaluation, he even considers the height of tires.

Besides instantly knowing whether a truck will fit in the loading dock, Kraft has become adept at the sounds the loading dock's overhead gate and cardboard compactor make when they require service, an advantage for Meng's maintenance budget.

According to Meng, Kraft's knowledge also contributes to keeping the

loading dock a secure entrance. "He knows who the truck drivers are, where they are going and what trucks are scheduled to come in."

One believes Kraft, a U.S. Air Force veteran, when he says, "I know everything that belongs down here." His concern stems, in part, because there is little free space in the loading dock: "We are so tight on available space there is no storage down here."

Kraft, who has two daughters, Teresa, a preschool teacher, and Erin, an x-ray technician, spends his free time traveling to visit family and friends.

He plans to stay on the loading dock until he retires, in part because he enjoys seeing the sunlight through the large Cesar Chavez Avenue door.

"It's my world," he explained. "That's all I can say. I know what works down here."

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The race is on: Operator maneuvers through traffic cone slalom at 2007 Bus Rodeo at the Santa Anita Race Track parking lot.

Operators May Now Register to Compete in 2008 Bus Rodeo

(July 31, 2008) Registration is now open for bus operators who plan to participate in Metro's 33rd annual Bus Rodeo, which will be held Sept. 20 at Santa Anita Race Track.

This year's event, hosted by the Westside/Central Sector, will be held at the track's parking lot at Gate 6.

Qualified operators interested in participating in the driving competition, or employees interested in judging, can sign up online at the [myMetro.net Rodeo](#) page or at the operating divisions.

All who volunteer as judges for the Rodeo preliminaries will receive an official 2008 Bus Rodeo hat, T-shirt and pin, as well as lunch.

Operators may practice from Sept. 4 through Sept. 9, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Gate 6 parking lot. The preliminaries will be conducted between Sept. 10 and 13. Everyone who competes in the preliminaries will get the official Bus Rodeo hat, belt buckle, T-shirt, and lapel pin. Finalists will also receive other Bus Rodeo items.

All Metro employees and their families are invited to this year's Bus Rodeo. In addition to the operator and mechanic competition, attendees can enjoy various exhibit booths, activities for kids, live entertainment, a barbecue lunch, a car and motorcycle show, and a fun day out.

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Although coaching reduces his practice time, John Downey typically finishes in the top three in state competitions. Here he uses a combination bow. *Photos by Mike Broder*

Archer Gets the Point and Returns to a Childhood Passion

By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 31, 2008) Captivated by archery as an eight-year-old and drawn back to the sport by the interest of his teenage son, John Downey, a Metro software engineer, now coaches some of the best young archers in the country.

Downey left archery for 15 years, until his son Kenneth, then 16, showed an interest in the ancient sport. They found a range within 10 minutes of their Simi Valley home, the Conejo Valley Archers Club, where Downey is now a club officer.

"I always enjoyed it as a kid," Downey said, adding that his interest in archery was probably stirred by seeing one of the many Robin Hood movies. After being Kenneth's first coach, Downey realized how difficult it was for a father to coach a son. So he began teaching others.

"The guy who was running the program needed some help—it was getting too big for one person to do—so I ended up taking some training at the Olympic Training Center," Downey said. "I took my second-level training through the Olympic coach at the Olympic Training Center (in Chula Vista, Calif.)."

That coach, Lloyd Brown, coached the U.S. team to the 1996 Olympic gold medal.



John Downey preaches form and consistency in coaching his students.

Downey, who has worked at Metro for 11 years, next co-founded a Simi Valley chapter of Junior Olympic Archery Development (JOAD), an international organization that teaches young people (typically nine to 19) how to shoot an Olympic-style recurve bow.

What is a recurve bow? Time for a little bow history. The classic bow, seen in numerous Robin Hood movies, is named a "long bow." These "D" shaped bows bend equally from the tips to their middle (the riser or handle).

"In a recurve bow, the tips at the very end bend away from the part you hold in your hand, so it's no longer "D" shaped; it's sort of "W" shaped," Downey explained. Through this shape-shifting, a stronger, more powerful, more compact bow is created.

Although the form of recurve bows hasn't changed in thousands of years, their materials can be cutting edge. For example, Downey's Olympic-style competition bow includes ceramic foam, carbon fiber and fiberglass.

And no 13th-century archer would recognize the modern arrows. They are made of thin-walled aluminum less than one-quarter inch in diameter and thicker in the middle to prevent fishtailing as they leave the bow. Instead of feathers, the new arrows use plastic vanes.

A recent invention—in archery time, at least—is the compound bow, which uses mechanics to make "pulling" the bow easier. "You've got cams, which are essentially pulleys, at either end of the bow," Downey explained. "So when you pull back the bow, it gets easier and easier and easier to hold, which is opposite to the recurve bow or the long bow."

When coaching, Downey wants his students to strive for consistency and good form.

"You want to have good form, so that you are doing it properly, but what is more important in some respects is to do everything the same, every single time, so that you are very, very consistent in how you shoot a bow," he said, comparing the consistency to that required of a baseball pitcher.

During tournaments, his oldest JOAD competitors shoot up to 90 meters (about the length of a football field), typically shooting at a goal the size of a dinner plate. To do well in a tournament, he said, an archer must put the majority of his or her arrows in that dinner plate.

As for his own shooting, Downey typically places in the top three at state tournaments, even though coaching cuts into his practice time. He doesn't seem to mind.

"Several of our college-age members have been on the USA college team that competed overseas for the World Championships," Downey said. "Over the years, more than 50 national or California State titles have been won by club members."

Downey's first student, Kenneth, tried out for one of the three positions on the U.S. Olympic Team this year, but was not chosen. In August the younger Downey heads for the U.S. Target Nationals, in Colorado Springs.

"It's a great sport," Downey said simply. "It's something that just about anybody can do. You don't have to have a great deal of upper-body strength. I've got 7-year-old girls who can outshoot 40-year-old men."

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