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MyMetro Employee News Article

Check it out: Flip through Metro's Flickr site to travel through the eras.

Metro's Flickr photo archive documents transportation history through images

By Kenn Bicknell
Metro Librarian
Special to myMetro.net

Metro's Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library and Archive is seeing tremendous success during the first year of uploading its digital historic photo collection to Flickr, the world's largest photo-sharing website.

In just 11 months, nearly 5,000 photos have been made available with more than 382,000 views recorded, while the library has received positive feedback from a variety of new Metro library "fans," who have featured some of the now-available Metro images in numerous popular blogs and publications.

Since the library began uploading photos to Flickr, users have identified individuals in the photos, locations where photos were taken and provided information about events, equipment and other historical facts.

Users can view others' comments and promote dialogue and education while viewers benefit from a peak at a retrospective of Metro's rich history.

Using Flickr not only dramatically increases the number of people who can see Metro's unique collection; it utilizes many social networking tools such as keyword tags (metadata) which lead users to other photos with similar

tags.

Over the past several years, social networking sites like Flickr, Facebook and Twitter have proven to be a useful sharing tool for private and public organizations with photo-sharing websites such as Flickr giving individuals and groups the opportunity to reach many more people than they could through their own website.

High-profile web-hosted access raises awareness that special collections such as Metro's exist, promotes their use, allows people to participate in identifying aspects of the photographs and is an important part of community outreach for the library and archive.

Photographs preserved on the Flickr site can also be saved in more than one photo set, so users have a better chance of finding relevant images whether they are searching for a topic, location, or time period.

The archive has also benefited from linking to photographs from other providers on Flickr that relate to Metro and its predecessor agencies – the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) and the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD).

This can add an extra dimension to the experience of searching for historical information about the transportation history of the Los Angeles area.

Metro's Library staff makes every effort to connect the library's collection with potential users – current employees, retirees, historians, students and others in the transportation community – and encourages them to share their memories and enhance information about the Metro photo collection on Flickr.

Metro's Flickr site is accessible at http://www.flickr.com/photos/metrolibraryarchive and those without Internet access are welcome to visit the Library on the 15th Floor of the Gateway Headquarters building and browse the collection.

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