

Metro Report Archives

January 2002 Articles

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MTA Issues [Final Environmental Report](#) on East LA Rail Project (Jan. 30, 2002) The MTA has made available to the public the final environmental report on a planned 6-mile light-rail extension of the Metro Gold Line through East Los Angeles.

[New 405 Carpool Lane a Hit: Dozens More in MTA Pipeline](#) (Jan. 29, 2002) The new MTA-funded carpool lane on the southbound I-405 freeway in the Sepulveda Pass is proving to be quite a hit among ridesharing commuters traveling from the San Fernando Valley to L.A.'s Westside. That's the good news for LA County motorists.

[MTA Bus and Rail Operators, Top Mechanics](#) to be honored for Excellent Work Performance. (Jan 25, 2001) The MTA will recognize the efforts of 67 of its top Transit Operations division employees at an Awards Banquet on Saturday. Thirteen receive "Extra Mile" awards for acts of courage, selflessness and extraordinary service.

[High Capacity 'CompoBUS' is MTA's Next Stop On High-Tech Road](#) (Jan. 24, 2002) The MTA stepped up its pursuit of high-tech transit solutions, today, as the Board approved plans to purchase 30 lightweight high-capacity buses.

Sheriff's Dept. Poised to ['Take a Bite Out of Crime'](#) on Rail Lines (Jan. 24, 2002) Jake, a Sheriff's Department narco dog, wasn't quite sure what to think of the Metro Blue Line trains he boarded. Not only did he have to stay on leash as he sniffed his way along the aisles, but the darned thing moved!

[MTA Offering Free Maps of Bus and Rail Lines](#) (Jan. 23, 2002) It's much more than just another public transit map and it's free at over 50 Nix Check Cashing outlets throughout LA County.

[San Gabriel Valley Sector Also Due July 1; Decision Will Trigger Other Moves](#) (Jan. 22, 2002) With growing confidence in the progress made toward opening the San Fernando Valley Service Sector, July 1, Deputy CEO John Catoe has set a process in motion to launch the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector on the same date.

[Committee Urges 'Neutral' Stance](#) on Transit Riders' 'Rights' Bill (Jan. 17, 2002) The Executive Management and Audit Committee voted, Thursday, to recommend that the Board assume a neutral position for the moment on a state Senate bill calling for adoption of a transit riders' "Bill of Rights" by transit agencies, statewide, and for a study of the Board's membership and structure.

[MTA Plans Expansion](#) of Metro Rapid Lines in Six Areas (Jan. 16, 2002) With the overwhelming success of the Metro Rapid bus lines on Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard, the MTA wants to expand the program to six other transit corridors over the next three years.

[MTA Plans Purchase](#) of 30 High-Capacity CNG Buses (Jan. 15, 2002) The MTA plans to buy 30 lightweight, CNG high-capacity buses – the first of up to 100 to be added to the fleet over the next four years. The Operations Committee will consider the initial \$12.7 million purchase at its Wednesday meeting.

Will Commuters Use [Electric Scooters](#) or Bikes? MTA Wants to Know (Jan. 15, 2002) Electric scooters and bicycles? The MTA and SCRRA want to find out whether commuters will use such energy-efficient, non-polluting devices – instead of their cars – to get to their nearest rail station.

[Operator William Michael's](#) Quick Action Prevented Serious Accident (Jan. 11, 2002) Things happened so fast last Tuesday evening that Division 3 Operator William Michael was operating on instinct when, in a dramatic effort, he steered a fatally injured man's car out of oncoming traffic.

[STATEMENT](#) MTA Board Decision to Appeal Consent Decree (issued Jan. 9, 2002)

[MTA Launches Appeal.](#) But Will Continue to Implement Consent Decree Board Chair, Mayor

[Meet with Media \(Jan. 10, 2002\)](#) The MTA will continue its efforts to implement the federal Consent Decree, Board Chairman John Fasana told the media, Thursday, while appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court for a clarification of compliance measurements and the federal court's role in solving transportation problems.

[New archaeological findings](#) at Universal City dig inspire commemoration of historic events at Campo de Cahuenga (Jan. 10, 2002) An archaeologist commissioned by the MTA to preserve the history of a national landmark has unearthed a section of the original foundation of the historic Campo de Cahuenga adobe where the signing of an 1847 peace treaty ended the Mexico-U.S War in California.

[CPUC Halts Construction](#) at 21 Metro Gold Line Intersections (Jan. 10, 2002) Construction at 21 intersections along a five-mile stretch of Metro Gold Line track between Union Station and Pasadena could be delayed until at least May while a safety and environmental review ordered by the California Public Utilities Commission is conducted.

[Catoe Outlines Sector Plan](#) for Chatsworth Crew; General Manager Due in February (Jan. 8, 2002) By the first week of February, Deputy CEO John Catoe told employees during a visit to Chatsworth Division 8 on Jan. 4, he hopes to have hired a general manager for the San Fernando Valley service sector.

[MTA, Montebello Officials](#) to Announce New Fare Agreement (Jan. 4, 2002) CEO Roger Snoble, Montebello Mayor Ed Vasquez and other elected officials have scheduled a Monday morning press conference to will formally announce an agreement with Montebello Bus Lines to honor MTA monthly transit passes.

[City Attorney Halts](#) Billboard Construction on MTA Property (Jan. 3, 2002) With a state court's order in hand, Thursday, Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo forced an advertising company to halt the construction of billboards on MTA property.

[Caltrans, MTA](#) Launch 3-Year Study of I-101 Congestion (Jan. 3, 2001) Caltrans and the MTA announced the start of a \$4.5 million study, Thursday, that will address congestion problems facing one of the most heavily-traveled transportation arteries in the region.

Bulletin Board

- **Division 3 Hosts [Safety's First Rollout with Speeches, Barbecue](#)** (Jan. 31, 2002) Wearing operators' blue uniforms and mechanics white coveralls and reflector vests, a large crowd of Division 3 employees gathered, Wednesday, for the grand kickoff of the MTA's new Safety's First program.
- [On The Job:](#) Help for Stranded Chinese Ends With a Song
- **More! WINNER'S CIRCLE PHOTO GALLERY** [MTA's 'Brightest Stars' Shine](#) at "Best of the Best" Awards Banquet
- [Gerald C. Francis](#) Named MTA's General Manager, Rail Operations (Jan. 25, 2002) Gerald C. Francis, an executive with more than 22 years experience in rail freight and mass transit, has been named the MTA's general manager of Rail Operations, effective Jan. 28.
- [Board Resolutions Cite Service](#) of Allan Lipsky, Charles Stark
- [Revenue's Agapito Diaz](#) to Take Job with Transit Technology Company
- [Task Force Making Strides](#) in Planning Service Sectors (Jan. 22, 2002) Scarcely six weeks into the process, the Service Sector Task Force has made great strides in developing the framework for the MTA's new service concept.
- [RRC](#) Recognizes 11 Employees of the Quarter
- [Jake's Adventures](#) (Jan. 17, 2002) Maybe you can take the boy out of Buffalo, but Jake finds that you can't necessarily take the Buffalo out of the boy. Especially when rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous.
- [On the Job: Never a Dull Day for Sheriff's Deputies](#) (Jan. 16, 2002) Funny, touching

or surprising – rarely does a law enforcement officer's day go by without a tale to tell. Three examples from the files of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau

- [Joe Loomis](#) is Facilities Maintenance Employee of Month
- Not Ready for Prime Time, Maybe, but Show Launches [MTA's 'Safety's First' Campaign](#)
- [Here's Something News](#) – Special Report: Service Sector
- [Next MTA Job Fair](#) Set for Saturday at Rebuild Center
- Former Chatsworth Golf Shop to Serve as [San Fernando Valley Service Sector Office](#)
- **SAVE THE DATE** 'Momma' to Host ['Safety's First' Campaign](#) Kickoff Friday.
- [Engineering Dept.](#) Completes Technical and Leadership Training
- Security Dept. [Holiday Drawing](#) Raised \$1,700 for Kids
- [Dennis Mori](#) has been selected to head Engineering and Construction
- Transit Rail Division's [Wasson Retires](#) with 31 Years
- **Repairs Begin Monday on Damage from January 2001 Fire** (Jan. 2, 2002) One year ago this month, a spectacular fire on the roof of the Gateway building forced the evacuation of MTA Headquarters.
- **More! [Holiday Buses](#) Take Season's Greetings on the Road**
Put a 40-foot transit bus in the creative hands of a team of MTA bus operators and mechanics, students, and community members, and what do you get?

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Joe Loomis is Facilities Maintenance Employee of Month

Joe Loomis, painter leader at the South Park facility, was named Facilities Maintenance Department (FMD) Employee of the Month for December 2001.

[^ Joe Loomis](#)

Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Dave Ulmer nominated Loomis for his excellent attitude, his high level of initiative and for his ability to plan and organize his crew's work with little supervision. Ulmer described Loomis as a strong leader who projects self-confidence and enthusiasm. His positive attitude inspires the cooperation and confidence of his crew.

The award was presented to Loomis, last month, during a small ceremony at South Park. Denise Longley, deputy executive officer, Strategic Development of Facilities – Operations, acknowledged Loomis' accomplishments, along with his peers, supervisor and manager. FMD Director Don Ott made the presentation.

The FMD developed the Employee of the Month program to formally recognize exceptional employees among the nearly 400 personnel in the department.

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Repairs Begin Monday on Damage from January 2001 Fire

(Jan. 2, 2002) One year ago this month, a spectacular fire on the roof of the Gateway building forced the evacuation of MTA Headquarters. The Jan. 12, 2001, blaze blackened and cracked the stone facing of the parapet and destroyed exterior lighting equipment.

Starting Monday, Jan. 7, a contractor will begin removing the damaged Minnesota limestone that forms the parapet and replace it with new facing blocks. The \$150,000 restoration project is expected to take four to five weeks to complete. This phase of the work will not include repairs to the damaged lighting.

Contractor crews will work on the parapet from 7 p.m. until 5 a.m. Security tape will be strung across the interior lobby doors during those hours to ensure that pedestrians cannot exit the building onto the Plaza. The third floor balcony also will be closed.

The Plaza area around the Gateway building from the stairs at the Cesar Chavez/Vignes intersection to the retaining wall on the west patio will be blocked to pedestrian traffic during contractor work hours. Detour signs will be in place to direct foot traffic.

The Plaza and Headquarters entrances and third floor balcony will be reopened for normal employee and public use from 5 a.m. until 7 p.m. each day.

"This work will have very little impact on our employees," says Brian Soto, director, General Services. "We have involved the Systems Safety and Security Department throughout the entire process and they've instructed the contractor on precautions to take to make sure no one is injured."

Since the January 2001 fire, a tarp has covered the parapet to protect it from weather damage. Soto said the MTA retained a forensics expert to assess the cause of the fire. Once the cause is determined and any legal issues resolved, the next phase of repairs can begin.



Bob Skarseth and Bob Ketring of General Services take a look at the area where the Gateway building parapet will be repaired.



Security Director Dan Cowden inspected the damage shortly after the fire was extinguished.



The Jan. 12, 2001, fire on the roof of MTA Headquarters could be seen for miles.

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Transit Rail Division's Wasson Retires with 31 Years

(Jan. 3, 2002) The commander of the LAPD's Transit Rail Division, Capt. Sandy Wasson, retired Dec. 31, 2001, after 31 years on the police force.

Wasson was responsible for providing law enforcement services during a number of significant and special events on the Metro Red Line during the two and a half years he led the Transit Rail Division. Perhaps the most notable was the opening of the three-station North Hollywood Extension.

During his work with the MTA, Wasson developed an in-depth knowledge of rail operations and security within the subway system. In retirement, he and his wife, Cyndi, will spend time with friends and family.

Until a permanent replacement is selected for Wasson, LAPD Lt. Rob Edgar will be acting commanding officer of the Transit Rail Division.

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City Attorney Halts Billboard Construction on MTA Property

(Jan. 3, 2002) With a state court's order in hand, Thursday, Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo forced an advertising company to halt the construction of billboards on MTA property.

During a news conference outside Division 2 at 16th and San Pedro, Delgadillo said the company had

begun installing billboards just hours before a new state law requiring city permits went into effect Monday, Jan. 1.

The company, STI/Outdoor LLC, a joint venture with Viacom subsidiary Outdoor Systems, last weekend placed billboard foundation poles at divisions 2 and 9 and on an MTA-owned right-of-way in East LA. A 30-foot hole for another billboard was dug at Division 7.

The MTA has had a long-standing agreement with STI/Outdoor to allow the erection of 41 billboards and 10 advertising kiosks on MTA property in exchange for placement of 10 Automated Public Toilets at Metro stations. The agreement, however, required the company to get MTA approval and obtain city permits before construction began.

"We will do everything in our power to tear down these billboards and make this company pay for its actions," Delgadillo said.

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A bus operator passes by one of two billboard foundations erected last weekend at Division 2.

Caltrans, MTA Launch 3-Year Study of I-101 Congestion

(Jan. 3, 2001) Caltrans and the MTA announced the start of a \$4.5 million study, Thursday, that will address congestion problems facing one of the most heavily-traveled transportation arteries in the region.



Rush hour begins on the 101

The Ventura (U.S. 101) Freeway Corridor Improvement Study will cover about 40 miles from Moorpark Freeway in Thousand Oaks to the Harbor Freeway in downtown Los Angeles.

The three-year study will evaluate current freeway conditions and will recommend improvements to increase average speeds, reduce congestion along the freeway and adjacent surface streets, reduce delays, improve safety, improve air quality and reduce commuter traffic in residential neighborhoods.

"The US 101 Freeway Corridor links residents, businesses and commuters in more than 25 distinct communities," said Linda Taira, Caltrans project manager. "Our goal is to define a path toward making this freeway corridor better for those who live nearby, and those who travel it regularly."

Caltrans, the MTA, SCAG, LADOT and the Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments will provide funding for the project.

Three public workshops to describe and discuss the project are scheduled during January, one each in Encino, Calabasas and Los Angeles.

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Dennis Mori has been selected to head Engineering and Construction

Dennis Mori Named Interim Executive Officer, Engineering and Construction

(Jan 3, 2002) Dennis Mori, a veteran of many of the MTA's major construction projects over the past 20 years, has been named interim executive officer of the Engineering and Construction division. He succeeds Charles Stark, who retired Dec. 30.

In his new post, Mori, 48, will be responsible for managing the department's bus and rail capital program projects. Most recently, he was deputy executive officer and project manager for the \$1.3 billion North Hollywood Extension, which was opened ahead of schedule and under budget.

Mori also was responsible for engineering and construction project management on the Eastside light-rail project, the San Fernando Valley Bus Rapid Transit and Mid-City/Westside Bus Rapid Transit corridor projects.

Prior to joining the MTA in 1982, Mori was director of design at an architectural firm in Pasadena. His work included design of institutional, commercial and government projects.

Mori, a registered architect, is a 1981 graduate of USC, where he studied business and architecture and graduated with a B.S. in architecture. He and his wife, Sally, a teacher's aide and community service volunteer, live in Rancho Palos Verdes with their daughter, Lauren, 15, and son, Brian, 12.

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Certificate Holders: Among those completing Engineering Department training during 2002 were, back row from left, Awny Malak, Roger Mays, Joel Sandberg, Suzanne Schmutzler and Frank Foster. Front row from left, Ajith Peiris, Andi Wang, David Chong, Ben Mendoza and Al Ong.

Engineering Dept. Completes Technical and Leadership Training

By STEFANIE SPIKELL (Jan. 4, 2002) MTA Engineering, in an effort to enhance its performance, recently completed a year of technical and leadership training. It was the second year of departmental training under the guidance of Human Resources.

Developed by Deputy Executive Officer Joel Sandberg, in consultation with Human Resources and the PMA consultant, the first year of the program was designed to enrich the Engineering Department staffs' writing capabilities.

To encourage cooperative efforts between Engineering and Procurement, the Engineering Department invited its contract administrators to join the monthly sessions held during 2001. The focus was on team-building and leadership.

The opportunity to see issues from each other's perspectives drew the group closer in its analysis of problems and generation of solutions.

More in-depth leadership training

As the joint group enters 2002, more in-depth leadership training will be the focus. As Engineering and Procurement work more closely together in the training sessions, their performance together on actual projects is becoming refined.

"If our engineers understand how the contract administrators operate and vice versa, we are more likely to find ways to expedite processes," said Sandberg. "Our process improvement focus has helped us to streamline our jobs and we have seen many positive changes in 2001, as a result."

"When the Engineering Department initiated this program, I took note of their motto 'Engineering Tomorrow's Mobility Today', and quickly came to an appreciation that this was a forward-thinking group, ready for some new challenges," said Juli Fowler, senior Training and Development specialist. "The program we have developed together has been a testament to the department's eagerness to work cooperatively with their counterpart organizations."

At the final session for 2001, Sandberg presented attendance recognition certificates to more than half the 70+ participants who completed the bulk of the sessions.

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Security Dept. Holiday Drawing Raised \$1,700 for Kids

(Jan. 4, 2002) It was a nice Christmas for the kids who benefited from the LA Mission Toy Project and for little Wesley Davis, grandson of MTA Security Sgt. John Davis, who won first prize in the Security Department's annual holiday drawing.

The holiday drawing raised \$1,700 for the Toy Project -- \$600 more than last year. And Wesley won a beautiful hand-made embroidered piecework quilt for his bed.

Taking home the second prize, a framed "Season's Greetings" cross-stitch, was Transportation Planning Manager Patricia Franklin. Customer Service Agent Maria Diaz won the third prize, a \$50 certificate for a honey-baked ham.



Patricia Franklin, above, and Maria Diaz, left, took home holiday prizes.

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MTA, Montebello Officials to Announce New Fare Agreement

(Jan. 4, 2002) CEO Roger Snoble, Montebello Mayor Ed Vasquez and other elected officials have scheduled a Monday morning press conference to will formally announce an agreement with Montebello Bus Lines to honor MTA monthly transit passes.

Read metro.net Nov.6:

[MTA Passes Approved for
Montebello Bus Lines](#)

The program, which went into effect, Dec. 30, 2001, is the first step toward developing a Universal Fare System for LA County. In the future, the MTA, municipal operators, Metrolink, paratransit operators and all other providers of public transit in the county would accept one form of payment.

The press conference will be conducted near a Metro Bus/Montebello Bus Lines stop. Montebello Bus Lines ambassadors will be on hand to distribute information about the agreement to transit users.

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New 405 Carpool Lane a Hit; Dozens More in MTA Pipeline

- **Nearly 400 Lane Miles in Operation**

By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 29, 2002) The new MTA-funded carpool lane on the southbound I-405 freeway in the Sepulveda Pass is proving to be quite a hit among ridesharing commuters traveling from the San Fernando Valley to L.A.'s Westside. That's the good news for LA County motorists.

And the even better news? With 396 lanes miles in the county currently in operation, the MTA has 352 more miles of carpool lanes in the pipeline.

Opened January 8, the 7.8-mile HOV lane, which runs between the 101/405 freeway interchange near Sherman Oaks and Waterford Street in West Los Angeles, is saving ridesharing commuters up to 15 minutes per trip, end-to-end.

"Just two days after it opened, the lane carried 3,200 ridesharing commuters per hour during the a.m. peak commute and brought welcome relief to those commuters on what had been a torturous drive," said MTA Board Chairman John Fasana. "Thanks to the new lane, those commuters have been traveling through the Sepulveda Pass at speeds between 30 to 50 miles per hour."

"Carpool lanes have proven themselves to be successful in encouraging more and more people to rideshare, and as a result, expanding the carpool lane system is one of the MTA's ongoing priorities," he added.

Largest carpool lane network

With the largest freeway carpool lane network in the nation already in operation, the MTA is on-target to bring congestion relief to many other areas of the county with 51 lane miles under construction, 104 lane miles in design and 197 lane miles in the planning phase.

The carpool lanes under construction and their estimated opening dates are:

- SR-14, Escondido Cyn. to Pearblossom Hwy., December 2002

- I-210, Foothill Blvd. to San Bernardino Co. (freeway gap), December 2002
- I-10, SR-57 to San Bernardino Co. Line, May 2003
- I-405, N/B auxiliary lane, Mulholland Dr. to Ventura Blvd., July 2003
- I-10, Baldwin Ave to I-605, August 2004
- Among the carpool lanes currently in design are:
 - SR-14, Pearblossom Hwy. to Ave. P-8, July 2004
 - I-5, SR-118 to SR-14, October 2004
 - I-405, Century Blvd. to SR-90, March 2005
 - I-405, SR-90 to I-10, December 2005
 - I-5, SR-170 to SR-118, July 2007

The new southbound I-405 carpool lane cost \$22.7 million to construct. Approximately 90 percent of the cost was funded by the MTA through the Los Angeles County half-cent sales tax measure Proposition C that was passed by voters in 1990.

Caltrans estimates that the lane currently is conveying approximately one-third of the total person-trips of all of the southbound lanes combined.

“This lane underscores the great efficiency of HOV lanes in moving people as opposed to simply moving more vehicles,” said Mayor James Hahn. “We can expect these kinds of results to multiply as we expand the HOV network.”

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The real deal: Thanks to reader Ken Matsuno, Division 18 Maintenance Manager, for setting the record straight. Congratulations to Division 18 for winning the coveted Best Bus Decoration Trophy. Photo: Ken Matsuno



And the Best Bus Decoration Trophy goes to Division 18 for their fanciful approach to cartoon characters aboard to get us in the holiday mood.

Holiday Buses Take Season's Greetings on the Road

By Ed Scannell

Put a 40-foot transit bus in the creative hands of a team of MTA bus operators and mechanics, students, and community members, and what do you get? Happiness on wheels.

Decorated for the Christmas season, buses from several MTA bus divisions paraded around the Patsaouras Transit Plaza, next to the MTA's headquarters in downtown Los Angeles, before the admiring eyes of Santa Claus, the public and a panel of judges. Holiday music played from the buses enhanced the mood.

Each bus arrived loaded with cans of food contributed by division employees as part of Operations Holiday Bus Stop 2001. Following the judging, the canned goods were distributed to churches, service centers and other organizations chosen by the employees of each division.

On hand to greet the arrival of the 15-ton, 45-foot buses featuring a ersatz Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, were students from Aragon and State Street elementary schools and Chatsworth and Poly Tech high schools.

Winners All...



Division 2 bags DAC trophy.

Some of more fanciful designs included Division 10's recreation of a gingerbread house complete with a descending Santa squeezing into the real toy shop inside the bus.

Division 18 won for Best Bus Decoration and runner-up Division 10 came in a close second.

The judges awarded the Elementary School Participation Award Trophy to Division 3 and Aragon Elementary School.

The High School Participation went to Division 8 and the always artful Chatsworth High School.

And, the Most Successful DAC Participation in the Holiday Food Drive was bagged by Division 2.

A total of 8 divisions and 4 schools participated in the bus decorating contest. Following the parade, the decorated buses returned to service and picked up surprised customers.

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Tigger and Pooh are bound for glory aboard Division 18 bus.



Division 8 and Chatsworth High School created a winter wonderland.



Division 10 Transportation Manager Evelyn Frizielle shows off gingerbread house that drew raves and earned second place in the Best Bus Decoration category.



'Safety's First' Campaign Kickoff set for Gateway



'Big Momma' ponders fame in this publicity shot taken to promote new safety tour.

(Jan. 8, 2002) The MTA's "Safety's First" campaign debuts Friday morning, whisked in on the skirts of a new gal in town: spokesmodel and safety maven "Big Momma."

"Big Momma," whose lithe figure and winsome smile have captured many a heart, will introduce the new safety program during a special event in the Board room. The event, a game show featuring audience participation and a team competition, will begin at 10 a.m.

CEO Roger Snoble will also be on hand to answer questions regarding the implementation of the safety program.

All Gateway employees are invited to attend the "Safety's First" kickoff. Operations employees are also welcome. A safety campaign for each division will be launched in late January. The program will be carried on closed-circuit TV in the cafeteria as well as the Union Station and Gateway conference rooms on the third floor to accommodate overflow from the Board room. The meeting will also be broadcast over the intercom system.

"I so look forward to hosting the 'Safety's First' show. It's just so important!" purred "Big Momma" during a recent rehearsal break to freshen her makeup. "A girl can't be too careful, you know. That's why I always wear flats instead of those uncomfortable – and dangerous – old high heels! That's my safety tip!"

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Catoe Outlines Sector Plan for Chatsworth Crew

- **General Manager Due in February**

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Jan. 8, 2002) By the first week of February, Deputy CEO John Catoe told employees during a visit to Chatsworth Division 8 on Jan. 4, he hopes to have hired a general manager for the San Fernando Valley service sector.

The new sector executive, who will operate out of a Chatsworth office beginning July 1, will be responsible for operations at nearby Chatsworth and at Sunland Division 15. He or she will lead a staff that will include administration, Human Resources recruiting, service planning and scheduling, customer relations, public affairs and security.

Catoe plans to hire the sector executive early, because, "I want the general manager to get to know you and the people who are making the transition out here to provide administrative support."

During a visit in which he talked for more than an hour and a half with maintenance and transportation employees, Catoe also addressed working conditions (he intends to improve them), managers ("I'm looking for good leaders.") and using employee names instead of badge numbers over division intercoms (he'll change the practice).

Throughout his presentations and in follow-up Q & A sessions, Catoe discussed the measures he will take to ensure that the MTA can provide quality service. These included focusing much of the agency's efforts on transit operations, placing management closer to daily operations and giving employees the resources they need to perform efficiently and effectively.

Intent is to improve quality

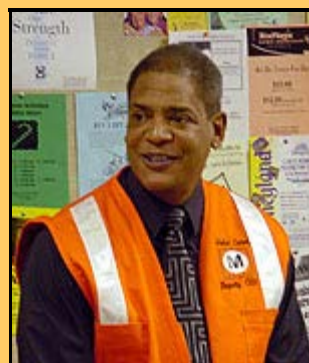
"The intent of service sectors is not to save money because, initially, it will cost more," he said. "The intent is to improve the quality of service. There will be savings and, as we save dollars, they will be funneled back into additional services."

Henry Najera, body shop leadman, said Chatsworth is "maintained with pride" because employees want to avoid the creation of a transit zone in the Valley. "We'll put more effort into it to save our jobs."

Also in metro.net > [Former Chatsworth Golf Shop to Serve as San Fernando Valley Service Sector Office](#)



Chatsworth Division 8 maintenance personnel, above, review sector plan with Deputy CEO John Catoe, pictured below.



Catoe led discussions with both maintenance and transportation employees in separate sessions and also addressed working conditions.



Of Catoe's message, he said, "It sounds promising and has some backing to it. If we keep the zones out, that's better for the MTA."

Efficiency often hampered

Employee efficiency is often hampered by poor working conditions at the operating divisions, Catoe said. Such conditions affect the MTA's ability to provide quality transit services.

"If we're going to be the best transit operation in the country – and we have that ability – I want you to be the sharpest, the most courteous operators," he said. "But, before I can ask that, I have to improve your working conditions."

In choosing service sector general executives and other managers, Catoe emphasized the need for leadership skills. "Leaders respect other individuals and see people for who they are. Managers are focused on the task, while leaders provide inspiration and direction."

Admitting that the use of badge numbers instead of names to summon employees at the divisions is a "pet peeve," Catoe said he'll "dictate" a change in sign-in sheets to reflect the use of names over badge numbers.

"We want to personalize our operations more because, when you do that, you have better relationships and the whole operation will improve," he said.

On other topics, the deputy CEO said:

Each service sector will be responsible for controlling its own buses with dispatch centers located within the sector. During an emergency, however, area-wide control of all bus operations will revert to the Bus Operations Control Center at MTA Headquarters.

Transit Operations has too few schedule checkers and transportation operations supervisors (TOS) on the street. There will be opportunities for employees to promote up to scheduler and TOS and other jobs involved with operations services.

Service sectors will be implemented within current budgets. Cuts will be made in non-operational areas to support the sector concept. Some vacant positions will not be filled in order to save money.

Although people may apply for jobs in the service sector nearest to their homes, represented employees will retain their right under the bargaining agreements to bid for jobs anywhere in the Metro system.

"We have all the potential of becoming a great organization," Catoe said, noting that management must treat employees fairly, provide leadership and resources. "But, it's got to come from you, too. We need to work together to achieve that."

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MTA will transform former golf pro shop in Chatsworth into the San Fernando Valley Service Sector office building.

Former Chatsworth Golf Shop to Serve as San Fernando Valley Service Sector Office

(Jan. 8, 2002) It formerly served as the golf pro shop of a Chatsworth driving range but, between now and July 1, the MTA will renovate the building for use as offices for the San Fernando Valley Service Sector.

See also metro.net report Jan 8:

[Catoe Outlines Sector Plan for Chatsworth Crew](#)

The one-story, 6,000-square-foot building stands on some eight acres of MTA-owned property at the intersection of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Marilla Street – less than a mile northwest of Chatsworth Division 8.

In a meeting with Chatsworth Division employees, Jan. 4, Deputy CEO John Catoe said the offices will house the sector general manager and administrative staff. Human Resources recruiting, service planning and scheduling personnel, customer relations, public affairs and security employees also will be located there.

The land, originally railroad property, includes a large parking lot consisting of 150 spaces and, behind the building, a fenced area once intended for a driving range. Across the street from a Radisson hotel, the building is within easy walking distance of restaurants and shopping. An entrance to the I-118 freeway is about two miles north of the site.

“This is a wonderful find for the new service sector,” says Deputy Executive Officer Denise Longley, whose department will be responsible for retrofitting the building as service sector offices. “I think it’s in very good shape.”

Facilities Maintenance has maintained the building since the pro shop closed 18 months ago. Inside are several offices and a central open space where merchandise once was displayed. Carpets are in good shape, but need cleaning, and utilities must be re-established .

Other improvements needed to convert the building to service sector offices include installation of employee cubicles, and connections to the MTA’s computer networks.

Putting to use a building the MTA already owns “will save us a lot of time,” says Longley. “We don’t have to worry about obtaining new lease agreements.”

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Next MTA Job Fair Set for Saturday at Rebuild Center

(Jan. 09, 2002) The MTA's effort to hire more bus operators, mechanics and other employees continues Saturday, Jan. 12, with the year's first job fair. The job fair is scheduled at the Regional Rebuild Center from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The MTA is seeking to hire bus operators, mechanics and service attendants to fill positions in its expanding Metro Bus fleet.

Information about job openings and applications for MTA and PTSC positions are available from the agency's Internet web site (www.mta.net) by clicking on [Employment Opportunities](#) or by calling the 24-hour Jobline at 922-6217.

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[MTA Launches Appeal...](#)

MTA Board Decision to Appeal Consent Decree

- **Board will seek Supreme Court clarification of compliance measurement from Consent Decree.**
- **Board orders action plan in 60 days on further implementation of Consent Decree.**

(Jan. 9, 2002) The MTA Board of Directors unanimously approved a proposal by Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn, Wednesday, to direct the MTA to come back in 60 days with an action plan to present to the Special Master on how the MTA will further implement the Consent Decree.

In addition, after serious thought and debate, the Board voted to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to clarify how to measure compliance with the Consent Decree and what role the federal courts can play in solving transportation problems.

The MTA reaffirms its commitment to the Consent Decree and will continue to fulfill its obligations under that agreement reached in 1996. We are not seeking to dissolve the agreement, but instead have plans underway to move forward with Metro Bus improvements. As new buses arrive almost daily, we're proposing a massive expansion of the popular Metro Rapid Bus program, construction of new busways, and decentralizing service to give communities more local control, among other improvements.

But, as it is currently interpreted, the Consent Decree has become a roadblock that threatens our ability to provide meaningful solutions to traffic problems, and chokes off transportation improvements for all of the residents of Los Angeles County, including bus riders.

Several weeks ago the Board postponed its decision on this issue and directed the MTA to reach a reasonable solution to this dispute. However, over the past eight weeks of meetings in which our CEO has been personally involved, the plaintiffs have refused to respond to our repeated attempts to settle the dispute.

The MTA Board feels it is a misuse of taxpayer money for the courts to order the MTA to keep adding buses on lines where there's already plenty of service scheduled, at the expense of areas that are underserved by buses, or which could be better served by other transit tools.

Against this backdrop, the MTA Board felt it had no choice but to exercise its duty to represent the transportation interests of all Los Angeles County residents and appeal.

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HISTORY LESSON

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Members of the Campo de Cahuenga Historical Memorial Association recount events surrounding the signing the Articles of Capitulation for the local schoolchildren in January 2000.

Chronology of Significant Archaeological and Historic Resource Findings at Campo De Cahuenga

1795 – Original adobe structure is built.

1847 – At the Campo de Cahuenga, the U.S. and Mexico sign the Articles of Capitulation, thus ending hostilities in California between the two nations.

1931 – J. Marshall Miller conducts first excavations of the site and discusses findings of the adobe structure's foundations.

1935 – Campo de Cahuenga obtains status as a State Historic Landmark.

1949 – The City of L.A. constructs a park building that memorializes the site's original adobe structure, and the site is declared a Memorial Park.

1983 – Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/FEIR) evaluates historic and cultural resources at the site, and establishes a Memorandum of Agreement concerning the mitigation of impacts of the Metro Rail Project on historic properties, including the Campo de Cahuenga.

1994 – LACMTA enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Universal Studios, which requires the widening of Lankershim Blvd. in front of the Campo de Cahuenga historical resource.

1995 – LACMTA archaeologist encounters glass and ceramics, and documents the presence and orientation of the original cobblestone foundations and tile floor of the Campo.

1996 – LACMTA archaeologist encounters a stratum of roof tiles at 30 cm depth, and the foundations and floor tiles of the original Campo de Cahuenga adobe. Other resources found include lime mortar, dog paw prints, ceramic plates, edgeware, porcelain plates, a pipe bowl, rifle cartridges, and scattered Native American relics, among other items, throughout six different rooms.

1997 – The State Office of Historic Preservation determines that the Campo de Cahuenga Historical Memorial is eligible for inclusion in the National

Register of Historic Places (NRHP), under the archaeological criterion.

1998 – LACMTA submits a Section 4(f) to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that proposes a significant reduction in the amount of Campo de Cahuenga land to be used for widening of Lankershim Blvd. in order to protect the site's adobe foundations.

2000- During grading activities for the Universal City Station Park and Ride facility, adjacent to the Campo de Cahuenga, LACMTA archaeologists encounter nickel-silver silverware, ceramic plates and bowls, beverage bottles, and assorted household objects and "refuse" dating back to the late 1800s-early 1900s. Furthermore, the State Office of Historic Preservation determines that the Campo de Cahuenga is eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of history, under Criterion B for its association with Mrs. Armitage S.C. Forbes (a pioneer in regional and statewide historic preservation), and under Criterion C as a planned historic landscape that is historically associated with significant events and persons.

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CPUC Halts Construction at 21 Metro Gold Line Intersections

(Jan. 10, 2002) Construction at 21 intersections along a five-mile stretch of Metro Gold Line track between Union Station and Pasadena could be delayed until at least May while a safety and environmental review ordered by the California Public Utilities Commission is conducted.

The CPUC voted unanimously, Wednesday, to require the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority to postpone construction at intersections located in Mt. Washington, Highland Park, South Pasadena and Pasadena while the review is pending.

Area residents had opposed construction of at-grade tracks in the intersections because of possible affect on pedestrians, auto traffic and emergency vehicle access to Huntington Memorial Hospital.

Construction will continue at 40 other intersections where city streets will cross the light-rail tracks. Crews will continue construction from Union Station through Chinatown and Lincoln Heights to near Avenue 45 in Mt. Washington. Construction also will continue from Old Pasadena to Sierra Madre Villa Avenue in East Pasadena.

The Authority building the Metro Gold Line had opposed any halt in construction at the disputed intersections, citing added costs of the \$732 million project and delays in the projected July 2003 opening date.

If at-grade construction is prohibited at the disputed intersections, Authority CEO Rick Thorpe said the agency would have to build bridges over or tunnels beneath the intersections.

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>Go to [MTA STATEMENT](#) issued January 9, 2002

MTA Launches Appeal, But Will Continue to Implement Consent Decree

- **Board Chair, Mayor Meet with Media**

(Jan. 10, 2002) The MTA will continue its efforts to implement the federal Consent Decree, Board Chairman John Fasana told the media, Thursday, while appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court for a clarification of compliance measurements and the federal court's role in solving transportation problems.

Fasana and Mayor James Hahn met with the media following a special Board meeting during which an eight-member majority approved the appeal. Hahn and three others voted against the appeal.

Fasana said the Board directed the MTA staff to work with Special Master Donald Bliss to continue complying with the Consent Decree "based on steps the MTA already has taken." He referred to the new buses the agency has purchased and improvements in service over the past several years.

In a statement released following the meeting, the Board said the Consent Decree "threatens our ability to provide meaningful solutions to traffic problems...and transportation improvements...." Efforts to settle the dispute with the Bus Riders Union have failed.

"We fully anticipate remaining in partnership with the Decree to implement improvements in service," Fasana told the media. "At the same time, we entered into the Decree under certain assumptions. (We think) the way the courts have taken what we thought were industry definitions and applied them...goes against the law...."

Mayor Hahn, who said he was disappointed with the appeal, was pleased that the Board approved his motion directing the MTA staff to prepare an action plan to demonstrate the agency's Consent Decree actions.

"One of the things I want this action plan to do," said Hahn, "is to allow us to go back before Special Master Bliss and Judge Terry Hatter and present to the court what the MTA has been doing and the progress we're making and how we intend to comply with the Consent Decree in the future. I think we've made significant progress in the past few years and the court needs to hear about it."

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Blast from the Past



Capt. Cresap and 1847 Howitzer.

BE THERE: 12:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 13, Campo de Cahuenga City Park, 3919 Lankershim Boulevard (across the street from Universal Studios and north of the Universal City Metro Red Line Station)



Carolina Russek Fiesta Dancers

WHAT'S HAPPENING:

Archaeological dig.

Re-enactment of signing of the treaty.

Actor Roberto Garza performs Gov. Pio Pico monologue.

Ray Herbeck's Frontier Legions appear in authentic uniform dress. Union soldier Capt. Cresap fires an 1847 Howitzer.

Celebration continues with Carolina Russek Fiesta Dancers; Yesteryear Dancers with Mademoiselle Irene and Company.

New archaeological findings at Universal City dig inspire commemoration of historic events at Campo de Cahuenga

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(Jan. 10, 2002) An archaeologist commissioned by the MTA to preserve the history of a national landmark has unearthed a section of the original foundation of the historic Campo de Cahuenga adobe where the signing of an 1847 peace treaty ended the Mexico-U.S War in California.

The archaeological site in the Campo de Cahuenga City Park is just a few yards away from the Metro Red Line's Universal City Station.

At that site on Jan. 13, 1847, Mexican General Andres Pico signed documents capitulating to U.S. forces, an act that laid the groundwork for California to become the nation's 31st state.

Archaeologist John Foster of Greenwood and Associates uncovered foundation stones and fallen roof tiles among other findings in a 6 1/2-square-foot excavation site in courtyard of the Campo de Cahuenga City Park.

Foster will unveil the findings at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 13, during a commemoration staged by the Campo de Cahuenga Historical Memorial Association to memorialize the historic events that occurred on the site over a century and a half ago.

Festivities will include a re-enactment of the meeting between Lt. Colonel John C. Fremont and General Andres Pico, in command of the Mexican Forces in California, which led to the cessation of

hostilities between the two countries and paved the way for California and other Western states to join the Union.

A team of archaeologists commissioned by the MTA unearthed and then preserved several portions of the original foundation and floor of the ancient adobe building in January 2000. In July, 1996, the archeologists discovered intact stone foundations, tile floors and various artifacts of an adobe building on the site. Recent research indicates that the adobe most likely was built in 1795.

The discoveries enabled the California Historic Preservation officer to determine that the site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Campo de Cahuenga has been a Los Angeles city park since 1923

and was designated state Landmark in 1935. A building was constructed in the park in 1949 to memorialize the historic events.

The opening of the Universal City Metro Rail Station in mid-2000 has resulted in a dramatic increase in the numbers of visitors to the adjacent Campo de Cahuenga.

The MTA plans to build an interpretive public display in the park courtyard and parking lot. MTA has been responsible for safeguarding the buried past of the park since the mid-90s when construction on the adjacent Metro Red Line subway began.

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Division 3 Operator
William Michael

Operator William Michael's Quick Action Prevented Serious Accident

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 11, 2002) Things happened so fast last Tuesday evening that Division 3 Operator William Michael was operating on instinct when, in a dramatic effort, he steered a fatally injured man's car out of oncoming traffic.

Michael's Line 180 bus and another Metro Bus had just pulled away from a bus stop about 5:30 p.m., Jan. 8. They were westbound on Los Feliz Boulevard, about to make a left turn onto southbound Vermont Avenue. Without warning, a car whipped around Michael's bus and ploughed into the rear of the bus just ahead.

The impact lodged the vehicle under the bus's rear bumper and, as the bus moved ahead, the car was pulled along. Suddenly, the car broke free and began rolling slowly toward the oncoming traffic.

Hoping to forestall another accident, Michael secured his bus, jumped out and raced toward the out-of-control car. The driver, bleeding profusely, was slumped over in his seat, apparently unconscious.

Without hesitation, the bus operator reached through the window and began steering the car out of harm's way. "I could feel the breeze from the cars as they passed us," he recalls. Running alongside and steering, he directed the car onto a vacant lot, then turned his attention to the injured man.

Michael, 30, a native of Belize who joined the MTA last September, also has had First Aid and CPR training. He felt the injured man's pulse. It was weak and he was still unconscious and bleeding. Grabbing his cell phone, Michael dialed 911 and requested emergency assistance.

Then, he ran back to his bus, and moved it to the curb. Again, he returned to the injured man. This time with a passenger who said she had medical training. Paramedics arrived shortly thereafter and transported the man, who later died.

But, Michael still wasn't finished. He ran back to the other bus and helped the operator deal with the four passengers injured in the accident. The passengers later were transported to Queen of Angels Hospital.

"William has been a conscientious employee in the short time he's been at the MTA," said Division 3 Manager Dan Frawley. "His actions were heroic and undoubtedly saved others from incurring a serious accident or injury."

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^ Game show host "Momma" puts contestants Mark Moorhusen of Support Services, and Karin Hodin of Planning, through their paces.

Not Ready for Prime Time, Maybe, but Show Launches MTA's 'Safety's First' Campaign



(Jan. 11, 2002) It'll never make the networks, but Friday's game show kickoff of the new "Safety's First" campaign – with "Momma" leading the way – was a smash hit, judging from the applause.

CEO Roger Snoble opened the rollout event with a "Safety Contact" – exercise caution on escalators – and the message that safety is every employee's responsibility.

But, then the floor...and the morning...was "Momma's." In frowzy yellow wig and print housedress, sneakers and knee-length hose – not to mention five-o'clock shadow – she moved the standing room only crowd to wild applause and catcalls.

^ "Momma" and CEO Roger Snoble join winning Transit Operations team (from left, Nadine Beffa, Steve Schupak, Beth Kranda, Norma Carrasco, Jeff Neely, and Matt Barrett) for a congratulatory photo.



Teams from Transit Operations, Construction, Countywide Planning and Support Services vied for first place in a wild game that had the contestants answering safety-related questions and spotting "What's

Wrong with this Picture?"

"Lifting should always be done by using the hips, shoulders and arms only," asked "Momma," demonstrating the action to laughter from the crowd. "True or false?"

"How can you protect yourself in an emergency at Gateway? In an emergency, it's always best to take the elevator for a fast getaway. True or False?"

The questions flew thick and fast, but, after two rounds, the Transit Operations team was declared the winner.

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* Update: Jan. 17

The committee approved the proposed bus purchase and sent it to the full Board.

* Update: Jan. 24

Approved by the full board

- MTA Plans Purchase of 30 High-Capacity CNG Buses



^ The NABI "Compo-Bus" is 45 feet long and seats 47 passengers. Made of lightweight materials, it is CNG-powered.

[>Schedule of committee meetings](#)

(Jan. 15, 2002) The MTA plans to buy 30 lightweight, CNG high-capacity buses – the first of up to 100 to be added to the fleet over the next four years. The Operations Committee will consider the initial \$12.7 million purchase at its Wednesday meeting.

The low-floor North American Bus Industries "Compo-Bus" would be 45 feet long, five feet longer than current MTA coaches. Each would transport 47 seated passengers, four more than high-floor buses and seven more than low-floor buses.

The NABI "Compo-Bus," priced at \$368,053, uses some of the technology developed in the MTA's Advanced Technology Transit Bus program. The buses are 20 percent lighter than conventional steel-framed buses.

Only recently, according to a Board report, has the bus industry developed the body designs and propulsion systems suitable for larger-capacity alternative-fuel buses.

In other committee action, Planning and Programming will hear a report, Thursday, that construction is scheduled to begin in March on a retail and housing complex at the Hollywood/Western Metro station.

The development will include 60 affordable apartments, 9,000 square feet of retail space, a 4,000 square foot community area and a 70-child day care center.

Committee meeting schedule

- Operations, 1 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 16
- Construction, 2 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 16
- Finance and Budget, Thursday, Jan. 17
- Executive Management and Audit, 11 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 17
- Planning and Programming, 1 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 17

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MTA Wants to Know...



Will Commuters Use Electric Scooters or Bikes?

(Jan. 15, 2002) Electric scooters and bicycles? The MTA and SCRRRA want to find out whether commuters will use such energy-efficient, non-polluting devices – instead of their cars – to get to their nearest rail station.

At a meeting next week of the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the partner agencies will ask for \$368,000 to fund a three-year project. If approved at the CTC meeting, the program could start this spring.

> MTA Board Member and County Supervisor **Yvonne Brathwaite Burke** gets a charge out a scooter at the MTA's first Technology and Innovation Forum in December 2000.

The idea originated with a group of planners in the MTA's Countywide Planning department and SCRRRA, says program coordinator Walt Davis.

"We'd like to be in the forefront of new and innovative forms of transportation," says Davis, who heads the MTA's Transportation Demand Management team, a group of planners who look for ways to reduce traffic congestion.

"Commuting by bike or scooter and train would help reduce congestion and eliminate some air emissions," he adds. "It's also cheaper to build bike racks and lockers than parking lots."

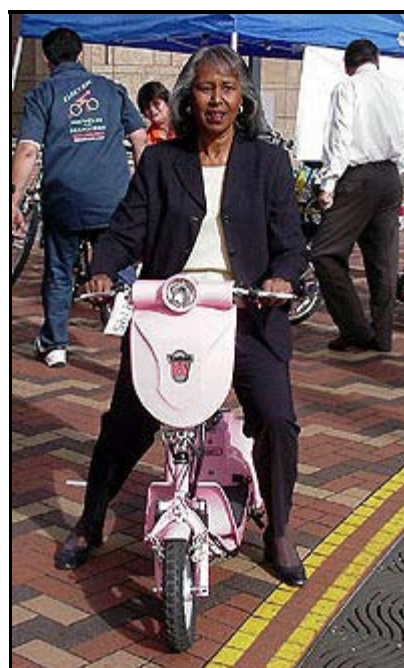
Provide scooters or bikes

The first phase of the study, tagged at \$180,000, would provide electric scooters or electric bikes for as little as \$10 a month to a small number of commuters at selected Metrolink stations. The criteria for the test stations would include good, safe bike paths leading to park 'n ride lots.

"We want to start out small to find out if there are any problems," says Davis. "We hope to learn whether any infrastructure changes will have to be made in order to make the electric bikes and scooters a viable transportation alternative. Lessons learned could include whether the users run out of power too often or have frequent flat tires."

Contrary to press reports, the scooters would not be the much-publicized and lawn-mower style "Ginger" scooters, according to Davis, but would be light-weight, fold-up scooters or electric bikes with small rechargeable electric motors. Both the scooters and the bikes could be carried aboard Metrolink trains.

The commuters involved in the test phase would be asked to keep a log of their experiences and would be surveyed occasionally to determine the



feasibility of the concept. If successful, the remaining funds could be used to buy between 200 and 500 electric scooters and bicycles in the final phases of the program.

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*UPDATE: Jan. 16, 2002

This item has been postponed until February

MTA Plans Expansion of Metro Rapid Lines in Six Areas

(Jan. 16, 2002) With the overwhelming success of the Metro Rapid bus lines on Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard, the MTA wants to expand the program to six other transit corridors over the next three years.

The plan calls for new Metro Rapid lines in the downtown area and South Central LA, East LA, West LA and the San Fernando Valley. Seventeen other lines – for a total of 23 – are to be implemented throughout the county in future years. The Planning and Programming Committee will consider the request at its 1 p.m. meeting, Thursday.

Metro Rapid lines scheduled in the first expansion phase are a 10.1-mile north-south line on South Broadway in downtown LA, a 12.7-mile north-south line on Vermont Avenue, a 29.5-mile east-west line on Pico/Venice through central LA, a 16.2-mile east-west line on Florence Avenue in South Central, an 11.7-mile north-south line on Soto Street in East LA, and a 12.4-mile north-south line on Van Nuys Boulevard in the Valley.

Metro Rapid bus service has reduced passenger travel times by about 24 percent, according to a Board report prepared by project manager Rex Gephart. Ridership has increased by nearly 35 percent, with a third of the increase attributed to first-time transit riders.

The proposed service expansion should permit an increase of 12 to 15 percent in the level of bus service in the transit corridors where it is implemented, with no increase in operating costs. An additional increase of 10 percent in Metro Rapid service will be made by reorganizing local and Metro Rapid service within each corridor.

Future Metro Rapid expansion plans include new lines in the MTA's major service areas. When complete, Gephart says the program will offer 400 new miles of Metro Rapid service throughout the county, "ten times the number of miles offered in the two demonstration routes."

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On the Job: Never a Dull Day for Sheriff's Deputies

(Jan. 16, 2002) Funny, touching or surprising – rarely does a law enforcement officer's day go by without a tale to tell. Three examples from the files of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau:



Deputies Shawn Moreno and Brian Moreno were on vandalism patrol, recently, at the Metro Green Line Marine Avenue station in Redondo Beach when they learned that taggers were spray painting a wall just around the corner from where they stood.

^ These lookalike Sheriff's deputies often draw surprised reactions from perps who run afoul of the law. From left are Shawn (we think) and Brian Moreno.

Hoping to catch the vandals at work, one deputy went one way around the block, while his partner went the other.

As Deputy Shawn Moreno approached, the two teenage suspects turned and ran in the opposite direction – straight into the arms of Deputy Brian Moreno.

The boys' jaws dropped as they looked from one deputy to the other. They weren't seeing double – they had just been apprehended by twin brothers.

Metro Bus Operator Robert Brown often noticed an elderly Korean woman at a Korea-town bus stop, but was surprised one day when she stepped aboard his bus. She seemed confused and he tried to question her, but she didn't speak English.

The woman remained seated on Brown's Line 207 bus all the way through South Central LA to his layover at the Rail Operations Center. There, Brown asked Deputy Alonzo Payne to help his elderly passenger.

Payne contacted Hollywood Sheriff's Station Deputy Sung Pak, who was able to learn, through speaking with the woman and others, that she is an 80-year-old Alzheimer's patient who had become confused and boarded the wrong bus. Through the teamwork of the MTA and LASD, the woman was returned safely to her home.

Deputy Matt Scoville was on plainclothes duty recently at the 7th and Metro station. As he watched, a man leaned a bicycle against a wall and walked away. A second man, who was talking on a payphone, abruptly hung up, grabbed the bike, and started to board a departing train.

Scoville and the surprised bike owner confronted the suspect, who was quickly arrested. But the disgruntled suspect had a parting shot. "If you would lock it up," he told the biker, "I wouldn't steal it!"

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Jake's Adventures

(Jan. 17, 2002) Maybe you can take the boy out of Buffalo, but Jake finds that you can't necessarily take the Buffalo out of the boy. Especially when rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous. – *Bill Heard, Editor*

Buffalo May Have Been Frigid, But California Was Really Cool

By JAKE SATIN-JACOBS

I grew up in Buffalo, New York. It's a great place to be FROM. I think life in Buffalo was best summed up by a character in the musical "A Chorus Line."

"I once considered suicide," he says, "But I didn't do it because I was living in Buffalo at the time and thought it would be redundant."

Last week, Buffalo got eight feet of snow in four days. It made me smile. I remembered months of being trapped in the over-heated, tightly sealed house with my three-pack-a-day smoking mother, where the only alternative to a slow death by asphyxiation was a slow death by hypothermia. I remember hearing that hypothermia was a painless way to go. I considered it often.

There is actually a style of hypothermic death called "Buffalo Syndrome." It occurs particularly among older people. Near the end of February, the hideous boredom and depression of life indoors finally debilitates people to the point where they decide to go out walking aimlessly in the snow. Sometimes they just pace back and forth in front of their houses until they freeze to death.

Maybe it's the result of all that snow, but Buffalo is not a great cultural hotbed. When I was growing up, the area was known for its steel -- now gone, its chemical plants (Does Love Canal ring a bell?), the hardiness of its Eastern European immigrant population, and its sausages.

The Palace Burlesque had been the flower of the northeast girlie show circuit and I was there to see the farewell performance of Rathouse Rosie, who could spin her tassels in opposite directions. At one time, Buffalo had had one of the finest art galleries in the country; but over the years, has sold off the bulk of its important works to pay its heating bill.

Unaccustomed to celebrities

Very few famous people have come out of Buffalo. Lucille Ball grew up in Jamestown, sixty miles south of the city. Dick Shawn -- a comic I never really understood or appreciated and who is now deceased -- claimed Cheektawaga, a Buffalo's suburb, for his home. Most notably, the finest folk rock musician of all times -- Ani DiFranco -- lives in Buffalo to this day, but she wasn't even a gleam in her father's eye till I had left the city. So, needless to say, I was not used to interacting socially with celebrities.

I had shaken Bobby Kennedy's hand (smaller and more delicate than I had

presumed) at a political rally; and I had gotten Mary (of Peter, Paul and...) Travers' autograph on the cuff of a shirt that I treasured, unwashed, until my first wife decided it needed laundering and therewith erased my most intimate contact with celebrity. But, all in all, I had not rubbed shoulders with famous people until I moved to California.

In 1974, when my first wife and I first moved here, we got a very nice rental condo next to the race track on the beach in Del Mar. The home was owned by race folks, who rented it out in the off-season. Our stay was limited to the time between the end of one racing season and the beginning of the next. So, it was cheap and the neighborhood was far better than we could otherwise have afforded. Our neighbors in that posh coastal community included, among others, Desi Arnaz, Jimmy Durante, Angie Dickenson and Burt Bacharach.

This list may not seem all that impressive today. And, admittedly, Jimmy and Desi were both near death, so neither of them was ever out walking around. But Angie Dickenson had the hottest show on television at the time and; her husband, Burt Bacharach, with a little help from Dionne Warwick between tarot card readings, had become the musical genius of the hour. And remember, I was just out of Buffalo. Everything impressed and overwhelmed me.

One day, I was walking my dog along the beach, skipping rocks, looking for sand dollars, whistling and generally enjoying the beach life. Suddenly, I noticed Burt Bacharach in the distance, walking toward me. I panicked. What would I say? How would I act?

Cool was the rule

I decided I would just be one of the friendly neighbors. The coolest approach – and cool was the order of the day – would be to smile politely, greet him by name, say nothing fan-like and move along in the same way any of his other neighbors might have. I walked; I whistled; I skipped stones. Burt passed.

"Hi, Burt. How you doin'?" I asked.

"Great. You?" he replied.

"Just great." I answered.

I continued along my way, satisfied that I had not betrayed my failure to have previously rubbed shoulders with greatness. I continued whistling.

Then, puffy, red-faced humiliation swept from my lips to my toes. Throughout the encounter, I had been whistling, "Rain Drops Keep Falling on my Head" – Burt's then current hit song.

Moral of the story:

You can run, but you can't hide. Life has a way of attaching that piece of toilet tissue to your shoe, pulling out your shirttail or unzipping your fly at will.

Jake Satin-Jacobs is a Chief Administrative Analyst in Transit Operations

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UPDATE: Jan. 24

The full Board approved a "neutral" stance on SB-18.

Committee Urges 'Neutral' Stance on Transit Riders' 'Rights' Bill

(Jan. 17, 2002) The Executive Management and Audit Committee voted, Thursday, to recommend that the Board assume a neutral position for the moment on a state Senate bill calling for adoption of a transit riders' "Bill of Rights" by transit agencies, statewide, and for a study of the Board's membership and structure.

The "Bill of Rights," which would apply to all California transit agencies, encourages transit agencies to set general goals for bus service, safety and reliability, use of clean fuels, crowding, public participation in deciding where service is needed and complaint resolution.

The bill, SB-18, sponsored by State Sen. Richard Alarcon (D-San Fernando Valley), was heavily amended earlier this week by the Senate Transportation Committee. The original bill included provisions to change the composition of the 13-member MTA Board.

The study will examine whether more members should be added to the MTA Board or whether some should be replaced with transit rider representatives. The legislature is expected to complete the study in July 2003.

The original bill would have reduced the number of county supervisors on the Board from five to three. It would have eliminated the three appointments by the Mayor of Los Angeles, who would remain a Board member.

It also would have given the president of the LA City Council two appointments and required two members to be appointed from the public – one of whom would be selected by the Bus Riders Union. Four members would have been named by the LA County City Selection Committee, as is currently the case.

SB-18 is scheduled to be taken up Jan. 24 by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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San Gabriel Valley Sector Also Due July 1

- **Decision Will Trigger Other Moves**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 22, 2002) With growing confidence in the progress made toward opening the San Fernando Valley Service Sector, July 1, Deputy CEO John Catoe has set a process in motion to launch the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector on the same date.

That decision has triggered a series of activities that will have significant impact on Transit Operations. That includes the hiring of two sector general managers, the location of temporary space for the San Gabriel Valley sector administrative offices and the construction of a new sector office.

It's a big task, says Catoe, and one he has had second thoughts about, but he believes it can be accomplished on time.

"I really have confidence in the people who are doing the work..." to plan the transition to service sectors, he says. "For the operators, the mechanics and service attendants, the way they do their jobs on July 1 will be the same way they did them on June 30."

Catoe plans to hold an all-staff meeting at Headquarters and at divisions 3 and 9 in February to discuss progress on implementing the service sector concept.

Search for office space

The search for office space for the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector general manager and staff is underway. Until permanent quarters are available, the service sector staff may be housed in existing MTA facilities.

To date, Catoe has interviewed eight of some 15 candidates who have applied for the five sector general manager positions. The MTA will continue to accept applications until all five positions are filled..

"We're getting some excellent candidates from the private sector, other transit organizations and from within the agency," says Cynthia Gibson, Catoe's staff director and head of the Service Sector Task Force. "It's going to be a hard choice for him to make."

In an interview with *MTA Report*, Catoe acknowledged that some employees are skeptical that such a shift in the MTA's service philosophy as the service sector concept represents can be made under the July 1 timeline.

"Sometimes, when you make changes in organizations and once you begin the process of change," he said, "it's better to just get it over with. I'm confident we're not going to get ourselves in a situation where we negatively impact services."

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SERVICE SECTOR SPECIAL REPORT

Task Force Making Strides in Planning Service Sectors

[> Task Force Roster](#)

(Jan. 22, 2002) Scarcely six weeks into the process, the Service Sector Task Force has made great strides in developing the framework for the MTA's new service concept.



Cynthia Gibson heads new Service Sector Task Force.

Task Force chair Cynthia Gibson, who also serves as staff director to Deputy CEO John Catoe, says goals have been established and many of the initial details are on paper.

Task Force subcommittees have been considering such matters as service sector staffing, the transition of administrative staff from the Gateway Headquarters into the service sectors and how community representatives might participate in decision-making within a sector.

"It's going really well," says Gibson. "Because the timeline is so short, our accomplishments are happening simultaneously and very quickly." Currently, the first phase of implementation for the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector – divisions 3 and 9 – and the San Fernando Valley Service Sector – divisions 8 and 15 – is scheduled for July 1.

One of the most significant goals for the Task Force is the development of a draft service sector organizational chart. The Task Force currently is interviewing employees who work in departments that would support the sectors for their thoughts on how the sector staffs should be organized.

General managers will provide input

"They're really giving us some good input on how to build the org charts," says Gibson. Once the sector general managers are hired, they also will provide valuable guidance based on their past managerial and transportation experience.

The Roster	
Members of the Task Force	Cynthia Gibson, Carolyn Flowers, Manuella Abrahamian, Matt Barrett, Michael Brewer, Marion Colston-Fayyaz, Jon Hillmer, Rick Hittinger, Maria Reynolds and Andrea Burnside.
Sub-committees	
Finance	Terry Matsumoto, Michelle Caldwell, Richard Davis, Frank Shapiro and Melissa Wang.
Facilities/ Space Planning	Denise Longley, Don Ott, Velma Marshall, Brian Soto, Irma Licea, Joe Giba and Larry Fordan.
Governance	Steve Carnevale, Michelle Jackson, Maria Guerra, Gary Clark, Joanne Kawai and Lynda Bybee.
	Marc Littman, Lynda Bybee, Bill Heard, Helen Ortiz and

Communication	Rich Morallo.
Staff Transition	Naomi Nightingale, Carolyn Flowers, Marion Colston-Fayyaz, Manuella Abrahamian, Brenda Diederichs, Barbara Olson-Bonk and Suzanne Lauver.
Planning/Timeline	Carolyn Flowers, Manuella Abrahamian, Andrea Burnside, Mike Brewer and Suzanne Lauver.
Planning/Scheduling	Jon Hillmer, Mike Brewer, Gary Spivak, Jim McLaughlin, Frank Schroder, Art Henry, Carol Silver and Mike Sieckert.

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Revenue's Agapito Diaz to Take Job with Transit Technology Company

(Jan. 23, 2002) Agapito Diaz, the MTA's director of Revenue, will leave the agency, Feb. 1, to take a position as vice president of an East Coast company that provides information technology services for transit agencies.

Diaz, 53, joined the MTA in June 1995 and was tasked with forming a revenue department. He centralized revenue, audit compliance, cash counting, fare media sales and other functions under one unit that now employs 150 and takes in some \$240 million annually in farebox revenues.



^ MTA Director of Revenue
Agapito Diaz

Prior to joining the MTA, Diaz served as assistant commissioner for Manhattan traffic enforcement at the New York City Department of Transportation.

As vice president of transit services at ACS, a former Lockheed-Martin subsidiary, Diaz will be responsible for overseeing a "smart card" fare services contract with WMATA in Washington, D.C., and for a "Smart Link" project with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. He will be based in Washington.

Among other services, ACS provides information processing for the traffic compliance cameras the MTA has placed at some Metro Blue Line intersections. The company also provides services for toll roads and parking lot ticket machines.

Diaz plans to spend a month on vacation in Mexico before reporting to his new job. A native of New York City, he and his wife, Estela Bensimon, will conduct a "bi-coastal" marriage – at least for a while. Bensimon is a professor in the USC School of Education.

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MTA Offering Free Maps of Bus and Rail Lines



By GARY WOSK

(Jan. 23, 2002) It's much more than just another public transit map and it's free at over 50 Nix Check Cashing outlets throughout LA County.

MTA's "2002 Metro Bus and Rail-Complete System Map," sponsored by Nix Check Cashing, details public transit services in an area encompassing 1,433 square miles.

Depicted in color codes are close to 200 Metro Bus routes, Metro Rail and Metrolink lines and some 50 municipal operators. The colorful, easy-to-follow maps also show transitway and busway stations, transit centers, bus and rail stations, highways and freeways. Numerous Nix Check Cashing locations also are referenced.

"Both novice and experienced public transit users in Los Angeles County, including out-of-town visitors, will find this map very helpful," said Board Chairman John Fasana. "Offering such a map goes a long way in demystifying the entire process of getting around Los Angeles via bus or rail and will, hopefully, give people the confidence to give it a try."

"This is the third consecutive year Nix has helped MTA reach out to the public with this valuable information," said Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Marketing and Customer Relations. "We are very grateful for their support."

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High Capacity 'CompoBUS' is MTA's Next Stop on High-Tech Road

By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 24, 2002) The MTA stepped up its pursuit of high-tech transit solutions, today, as the Board approved plans to purchase 30 lightweight high-capacity buses.

North American Bus Industries of Anniston, Ala. will manufacture the "CompoBUS," which could chart the future of MTA bus purchases for years to come.

Powered by compressed natural gas, the low-floor "CompoBUS" will be 45 feet long, five feet longer than current MTA coaches. The "CompoBUS" will transport 47 seated passengers, four more than a traditional high-floor bus and seven more than a low-floor bus.

Priced at \$368,053, the "CompoBUS" employs some of the technology developed by the MTA in its Advanced Technology Transit Bus program, including a shell constructed of lighter composite materials. Hence the name "CompoBUS." The composite material used is primarily fiberglass with a balsa core construction method similar to that found in the marine industry.

Simplicity of repairs

The "CompoBUS" will be 20 percent lighter than a conventional 45-foot steel-framed bus, resulting in better fuel economy and reduced brake wear. Other benefits of using composite material include simplicity of repair and absolute resistance to corrosion.

Until now, transit authorities have been reluctant to use 45-foot buses because the larger buses required a dual rear axle. A dual rear axle increases vehicle weight, thereby increasing fuel and maintenance costs. The 45-foot "CompoBUS" uses only a single rear axle, similar to MTA's 40-foot buses, resulting in a bus that is less expensive to operate and maintain.

"We see tremendous potential in the 'CompoBUS,'" said John Catoe, MTA deputy chief executive officer. "We're adding capacity while saving weight, a rare combination in bus manufacturing."

The first of the 30 "CompoBUS" coaches will begin arriving in summer 2003, while later this year 20 coaches of a shorter, 40-foot design will arrive and be placed into service.

"We're on a mission to provide the best service possible for the 1.2 million passengers we carry every day on the Metro Bus system, while making the best use of the taxpayer dollars we spend," said Board Chairman John Fasana. "The 'CompoBUS' is an excellent example of how new technologies can give us better value for our dollars in a package that combines innovation with proven reliability."

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See
metro.net
Jan. 15:

[MTA Plans
Purchase
of 30
High-
Capacity
CNG Buses](#)

Board Resolutions Cite Service of Allan Lipsky, Charles Stark

(Jan. 24, 2002) The MTA Board took a few moments from its agenda, Thursday, to express appreciation to two staff members who filled leadership roles during critical periods for the agency.

Board Chairman John Fasana presented resolutions to Allan Lipsky, who resigned last month after four years as deputy CEO, and Charles Stark, who retired in December after serving as Metro Construction executive officer.



Board Chairman John Fasana presents resolution to Allan Lipsky, who resigned last month after four years as deputy CEO.

His resolution cited Lipsky for restoring “financial stability and respect” to the MTA and for “unifying both structure and resources for optimum agency-wide performance.”

It noted among Lipsky’s accomplishments the adoption of the MTA Restructuring Plan and the Regional Transit Alternative Analysis, the initiation of Metro Rapid bus service and approval of a Long-Range Transportation Plan.



Charles Stark, who retired in December after serving as Metro Construction executive officer, receives resolution.

Stark’s achievements during 10 years service with the MTA included “design and construction of an integrated Metro Rail system, including completion of the 17.4-mile Metro Red Line...completion of the Metro Green Line...and improvements to the 22-mile Metro Blue Line...”

He also “achieved honor and distinction for the MTA’s construction program through completing the \$1.3 billion North Hollywood...Extension ahead of schedule and under budget...”

A retirement party for Stark is scheduled from 5-7 p.m., tonight, at the Hyatt Regency at Macy’s Plaza, 711 South Hope St. A farewell event for Lipsky is planned for 3 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 7, in the MTA Cafeteria.

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Sheriff's Dept. Poised to 'Take a Bite Out of Crime' on Rail Lines

(Jan. 24, 2002) Jake, a Sheriff's Department narco dog, wasn't quite sure what to think of the Metro Blue Line trains he boarded. Not only did he have to stay on leash as he sniffed his way along the aisles, but the darned thing moved!

Still, by the end of a four-hour familiarization exercise, Wednesday, Jake seemed to gain more confidence. The Belgian

Malinois and his handler, Deputy Joy Burch, were part of a team of deputies who boarded trains to look for narcotics, but mostly to get riders' reactions to the presence of the dog.



Jake, a narco dog, leads Sheriff's Deputy Joy Burch down the aisle of a Metro Blue Line train during a recent familiarization exercise.

"Everyone I talked to seemed very positive," said Transit Services Bureau Deputy Ban Nguyen, who coordinated the exercise. "Most mentioned 9-11 and terrorists, and they felt safer when they saw Jake."

That's the reaction the Sheriff's Department wants, according to Capt. Dan Finklestein, commanding officer of the Transit Services Bureau. "We hope to use the dogs frequently on the rail lines and on buses." The Bureau is under MTA contract to patrol the Metro Blue and Green lines and bus lines in unincorporated areas.

Two more dogs are scheduled for rail familiarization exercises, Jan. 28. Nguyen noted that the team found no drugs during Wednesday's exercise. The Sheriff's Department employs six narcotics dogs, two bomb-sniffing dogs and a dog used in arson investigations.

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Gerald Francis

Gerald C. Francis Named MTA's General Manager, Rail Operations

(Jan. 25, 2002) Gerald C. Francis, an executive with more than 22 years experience in rail freight and mass transit, has been named the MTA's general manager of Rail Operations, effective Jan. 28.

Currently the assistant vice president of Rail Operations for Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Francis also has held rail management positions with Bi-State Development in St. Louis and with the Union Pacific Railroad.

"Gerald brings a wealth of rail experience, including a background in start-up programs, to the MTA," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "And, with his strong customer service credentials and leadership, he will make a valuable contribution to our Metro Rail program."

Joining DART in 1995 as manager of Central Rail Operations, he was involved in start-ups on the agency's light-rail line. In 1997, he was named senior manager of Central Rail Operations.

Since 1999, Francis has been assistant vice president, Rail Operations, with responsibility for rail operations and build-out of extensions to DART's light-rail system. He also oversees the Operations Control Center, rail yard operations and training, the operations administrative staff and field supervisors.

Prior to joining DART, Francis was transportation supervisor and controller of the light-rail start-up program in St. Louis. He supervised daily central control operations and was responsible for movement of all trains and mainline activities.

He began his transportation career in 1979 with the Union Pacific, where he held positions as manager of Safety, manager of Terminal Operations and manager of Yard and Industry Operations.

A business administration graduate of Creighton University in Omaha, Francis is a member of the APTA Rail Rodeo sub-committee and of APTA's Transit Standards general rules sub-committee. He and his wife, Michelle, a publishing company customer service manager, have three grown children, Shawna, Gerald, Jr., and Nicole.

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**MTA Bus and Rail
Operators, Top
Mechanics to be
honored for Excellent
Work Performance**



[The Roster](#)

- **The MTA will recognize the efforts of 67 of its top Transit Operations division employees at an awards banquet on Saturday. Thirteen receive “Extra Mile” awards for acts of courage, selflessness and extraordinary service.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Jan. 23, 2001) The top one percent of MTA's 6,500-strong Transit Operations force will be honored as the “Best of the Best – MTA's Brightest Stars” at a banquet, Saturday, co-sponsored by Transit Operations, Risk Management and the Office of System Safety and Security.

Among the presenters will be MTA Board Chairman John Fasana, CEO Roger Snoble and Deputy CEO John Catoe.

“Best of the Best” awards, presented for the third year in row, will be given to 41 Metro Bus operators, two Metro Rail Green Line train operators, and nine top mechanics. The 52 honorees compiled exemplary safety and attendance records and provided excellent customer service possible over a five-year span beginning in 1996.

“Our operators and mechanics are this region’s unsung heroes. Through a maze of traffic, tough streets that get even more dangerous in the rain, whatever conditions present themselves all hours of the day and night, they get our passengers to their destination safely. And these individuals deliver that service without an accident or a single complaint from the public we serve,” said Board Chairman Fasana. “On behalf of the Board of Directors, I commend each of these outstanding employees for an extraordinary achievement of integrity, courage and dedication to public service.”

The 41 bus and 2 rail operators who will

Going the ‘Extra Mile’

Thirteen Transit Operations employees will receive “Extra Mile” awards for their acts of courage, selflessness and extraordinary service. They are Division 5 supervisors Laureen Lemon and Michael Walton, Division 7 supervisor Alice Gates, Metro Bus operators Mimi Pereira, Louvenia Harris, and Dhamika Kahanda, Division 9 supervisor Clyde Berry, Bus Operations Control analyst Monique Ramos, BOC supervisor Steve Rank, mechanic Francisco Guzman and Bus Roadeo champion Mark Holland and the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo winning maintenance team from Division 10, David Klinkenborg, Alan Wong and Doug Creveling.

Among those who received the ‘Extra Mile’ award, Operator Mimi Pereira was commended by the Burbank Chamber of Commerce for outstanding service to the community involving disabled passengers.

The Chamber recognized Pereira, of Sunland Division 15, by presenting a surprise award to her at a bus stop in downtown Burbank last November. Pereira, who joined the MTA in 1984, was honored for assisting a developmentally disabled passenger on two separate occasions.

Also honored are pedal-to-the-medal winners and champions of the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo. Alan Wong, Doug Creveling and David Klinkenborg, the team of mechanics from Metro Division 10, were crowned the Roadeo’s Champion Maintenance Team during regional competition Sept. 8 in Hemet, Calif.

Another Bus Roadeo champion, Division 9’s top gun operator Mark Holland, will also take home the “Extra Mile” award. While competing for honors at the APTA

receive the award were selected from among 4,464 MTA operators. There are 1,944 mechanics.

International Bus Rodeo, Sept. 29, in Philadelphia, Holland drove to third place in a demanding contest that pitted him against 71 of North America's top professional bus operators. It was the highest placement, yet, for any MTA bus operator competing in the annual international competition.

Thirteen of the bus operators earned the "Best of the Best" distinction for the third year; and 20 topped the charts for the second year in a row. It also is the second appearance at the awards banquet for five of the nine mechanics.

"The awards are evidence that the MTA is on its way to becoming a world-class transportation agency," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "And we will get there by being committed to excellence and providing good service just like the 'Best of the Best' we honor here."

To qualify as "Best of the Best," operators must have recorded no customer complaints, no lost-time injuries, no traffic accidents and no long-term leaves for the past five years. Mechanics must have had perfect attendance, no lost-time injuries and no disciplinary actions for the past five years.

Each honoree will receive a commemorative plaque. Newcomers will receive either an operator jacket or a bomber jacket with "Best of the Best" logo. Those who will receive the honor for a second year will receive a gold Seiko railroad-approved watch engraved with the program logo. Third-time honorees, who have already earned their jacket and watch, take home an AmEx certificate worth \$250.



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New 405 Carpool Lane a Hit; Dozens More in MTA Pipeline

- **Nearly 400 Lane Miles in Operation**

By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 29, 2002) The new MTA-funded carpool lane on the southbound I-405 freeway in the Sepulveda Pass is proving to be quite a hit among ridesharing commuters traveling from the San Fernando Valley to L.A.'s Westside. That's the good news for LA County motorists.

And the even better news? With 396 lanes miles in the county currently in operation, the MTA has 352 more miles of carpool lanes in the pipeline.

Opened January 8, the 7.8-mile HOV lane, which runs between the 101/405 freeway interchange near Sherman Oaks and Waterford Street in West Los Angeles, is saving ridesharing commuters up to 15 minutes per trip, end-to-end.

"Just two days after it opened, the lane carried 3,200 ridesharing commuters per hour during the a.m. peak commute and brought welcome relief to those commuters on what had been a torturous drive," said MTA Board Chairman John Fasana. "Thanks to the new lane, those commuters have been traveling through the Sepulveda Pass at speeds between 30 to 50 miles per hour."

"Carpool lanes have proven themselves to be successful in encouraging more and more people to rideshare, and as a result, expanding the carpool lane system is one of the MTA's ongoing priorities," he added.

Largest carpool lane network

With the largest freeway carpool lane network in the nation already in operation, the MTA is on-target to bring congestion relief to many other areas of the county with 51 lane miles under construction, 104 lane miles in design and 197 lane miles in the planning phase.

The carpool lanes under construction and their estimated opening dates are:

- SR-14, Escondido Cyn. to Pearblossom Hwy., December 2002
- I-210, Foothill Blvd. to San Bernardino Co. (freeway gap), December 2002
- I-10, SR-57 to San Bernardino Co. Line, May 2003
- I-405, N/B auxiliary lane, Mulholland Dr. to Ventura Blvd., July 2003
- I-10, Baldwin Ave to I-605, August 2004
- Among the carpool lanes currently in design are:
- SR-14, Pearblossom Hwy. to Ave. P-8, July 2004
- I-5, SR-118 to SR-14, October 2004
- I-405, Century Blvd. to SR-90, March 2005

I-405, SR-90 to I-10, December 2005

- I-5, SR-170 to SR-118, July 2007

The new southbound I-405 carpool lane cost \$22.7 million to construct. Approximately 90 percent of the cost was funded by the MTA through the Los Angeles County half-cent sales tax measure Proposition C that was passed by voters in 1990.

Caltrans estimates that the lane currently is conveying approximately one-third of the total person-trips of all of the southbound lanes combined.

"This lane underscores the great efficiency of HOV lanes in moving people as opposed to simply moving more vehicles," said Mayor James Hahn. "We can expect these kinds of results to multiply as we expand the HOV network."

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MTA's Brightest Stars Shine at "Best of the Best" Awards Banquet



Board Chairman John Fasana, veteran service attendant Arthur Winston and CEO Roger Snoble top off the evening with award-winning smiles

'Best of the Best' Photo Gallery

[Tour the Winner's Circle](#) or by Division.

Use your browser's "Back" button to return to previous frame.

[CROSSROADS](#) DIVISION 2

[CYPRESS PARK](#) DIVISION 3

[ARTHUR WINSTON](#) DIVISION 5

[VENICE](#) DIVISION 6

[WEST HOLLYWOOD](#)
DIVISION 7

[EL MONTE](#) DIVISION 9

[GATEWAY](#) DIVISION 10

[EAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY](#) DIVISION 15

[SOUTH BAY](#) DIVISION 18

[TRANSPORTATION](#) "EXTRA MILE"

[MAINTENANCE](#)

[MAINTENANCE 2ND TIME](#) RECIPIENTS

[MAINTENANCE](#) "EXTRA MILE"

[RAIL OPERATIONS](#)

By GAYLE ANDERSON, Associate Editor

(Jan. 29, 2002) The stars came out for the annual MTA "Best of the Best," Saturday night, as Board Chairman John Fasana, Ceo Roger Snoble, Deputy CEO John Catoe and MTA executives paid homage to the MTA's top Transit Operations employees before an appreciative audience and fans at the Universal Sheraton.

"Tonight, seeing stars within the MTA sky is totally appropriate," said Fasana, as he began his keynote remarks. But, first, a pause, as he acknowledged, then introduced two activist bus riders in the audience.

"They are very demanding bus riders," said Fasana as Board members Allison Yoh and Pam O'Connor joined him at the podium, "and passionate about the service you provide."

"Throughout my life," said O'Connor, "a bus has been the means of discovery, a way of learning about the world."

And Yoh, who arrived at the banquet by bus, said Metro Bus operators set the tone of a community on board every bus.

"When you're attentive, when you're



Committee members Matt Barrett and Alicia Walker

On the Job

The third annual "Best of the Best" awards were made possible by the extraordinary efforts of a hard-working committee. Chaired this year by Robert Torres, the members are: **Transit Operations:** Matthew

conscientious, when you're safe," she told the bus operators and mechanics in the attentive audience of nearly 100, "you're getting us to places where we need to go and we're very appreciative. We put our lives in your hands."

" 'Best of the Best' is an organization-wide commitment to a never-ending improvement process," said Fasana.

And, to that end, the top one percent of the MTA's 6,500-strong Transit Operations force were showered with accolades along with commemorative plaques, a couple of perks, and a hearty handshake and congratulations from Snoble, John Catoe, incoming General Manager of Rail Operations Gerald Francis and respective DEO's as honorees took the stage, division by division. It was a moment for each division to shine.

"Best of the Best" awards, presented for the third year in row, were given to 41 Metro Bus operators, two Metro Rail Green Line train operators, and nine top mechanics. The 52 honorees compiled exemplary safety and attendance records and provided excellent customer service possible over a five-year span beginning in 1996.

Fourteen Transit Operations employees received "Extra Mile" awards for their acts of courage, selflessness and extraordinary service.

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Barrett, Gary Spivack, Alicia Walker. **Office of System Safety and Security:** Pamela Engelke, Sylvia Pantoja, Committee Chairman Robert H. Torres. **Risk Management:** Leo Costantino, Norma Flores, Lucille Van DerHeyden. The event was sponsored by Risk Management, Office of System Safety and Security and Transit Operations.

MTA Issues Final Environmental Report on East LA Rail Project

By ED SCANNELL

The MTA has made available to the public the final environmental report on a planned 6-mile light-rail extension of the Metro Gold Line through East Los Angeles.

The extension would serve one of the most densely populated areas of Los Angeles County. Construction of the 1.7-mile tunnel portion of the project could begin in mid-2003. The extension could begin operations in mid-2008.

The report, called the Final EIS/EIR for the Los Angeles Eastside Corridor, includes responses to public comments received following last year's release of the Draft EIS/EIR, and a refined analysis.

It also includes a detailed mitigation plan that addresses community concerns regarding impacts during construction and operation of the light-rail project.

If the MTA Board votes at its Feb. 28 meeting to certify the Final EIS/EIR, the proposed project then would be presented to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for its approval before beginning final project design.

Eastiders have been patient

"The people of the Eastside have waited patiently for several years for this project, which will connect them to the growing Metro Rail system and greatly improve their access to jobs, medical facilities and places of recreation," said Board Chairman John Fasana. "We could not have reached this milestone without their substantial support."

The Eastside light-rail project would serve as an extension of the Metro Gold Line, which is now under construction between Union Station and Pasadena and is expected to begin operations in mid-2003.

The extension would operate from Union Station to Atlantic Boulevard along 1st Street, then transition to 3rd Street via Indiana Street and proceed east along 3rd Street to Atlantic Boulevard.

The extension would include nine stations and operate at street level with the exception of a tunnel segment through Boyle Heights that was necessitated by the narrowness of streets along this portion of the alignment.

"Buses will remain an important part of the transit system, but given the eastside's population and transit use, the area is a prime candidate for this extension of the Metro Rail system," said Supervisor Gloria Molina. "The extension will provide the people of East Los Angeles with a seamless connection to a large portion of the county, which will prove even more valuable as traffic congestion on our streets and highways grows."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Mike Parker is a lieutenant in the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau. He is stationed at the MTA's Rail Operations Center. "On The Job" is an occasional Bulletin Board feature about the little things that make a law enforcement officer's job interesting and rewarding.

On The Job

Help for Stranded Chinese Ends With a Song

By MIKE PARKER

(Jan. 30, 2002) Imagine yourself stranded in the middle of China. No money in your pocket, no friends and no way to communicate.

Well, for Weixen Wang, a Chinese man who only speaks Mandarin, something like that really happened—in the middle of Los Angeles.

Around 3 p.m., last Sunday, MTA Rail Operations Supervisor Amador Silva found Wang lost, hungry and scared at the Artesia station on the Metro Blue Line.

With some inventive sign language and a lot of patience, the professional and kind-hearted Silva calmed the man and bought him a meal. Silva also tried to help Wang call a New York phone number he had with him. Then, his options exhausted, Silva took the man to the Sheriff's Station at the Rail Operations Center.

With the help of an AT&T language line interpreter, deputies Jose Belmarez and Gary Lindenmayer learned that a traveling companion had deserted Wang in Los Angeles some days ago, penniless and without identification. He had many relatives, but they were all in New York.

Contacted his family

The deputies helped Wang contact his family by phone, then bought him lunch. After the meal, they decided to take him to St. Dorothy's Church in Glendora, where a homeless outreach group includes a Mandarin speaker.

On the way to St. Dorothy's, the deputies realized they needed Wang's age for their report. Belmarez wrote down his own age and that of his partner. He showed the numbers to the man and pointed to himself and to Lindenmayer. No luck.

After several unsuccessful attempts, Belmarez jokingly began to sing, "Happy Birthday to You." Much to his surprise, Wang smiled and began to sing along – in Mandarin. Then, he wrote down his age – 32 – for the deputies.

Some things do translate well, after all.

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^ Deputy CEO John Catoe promised to improve the working environment as part of the Safety's First effort.

Division 3 Hosts Safety's First Rollout with Speeches, Barbecue

(Jan. 31, 2002) Wearing operators' blue uniforms and mechanics white coveralls and reflector vests, a large crowd of Division 3 employees gathered, Wednesday, for the grand kickoff of the MTA's new Safety's First program.

Deputy CEO John Catoe was joined by UTU General Chairman James Williams, Local 1607 Chairman Rick Ortega and Vice Chairman Joe White, Deputy Executive Officer John Roberts and others to participate in the program rollout. The festivities included a safety game, with prizes of Safety's First ball caps and gift baskets, and a barbecue.

"The key to being Number One in safety is to make sure you are safe, to give you the best equipment, to listen to you and to ask for your input as we order new vehicles, as we modify facilities and as we put out new services," said Catoe.

Speaking for his union members, [UTU General Chairman James Williams lent his union's support to the Safety's First program.](#) Williams said, "This union cares about its members and we're particularly concerned about their safety. For that reason, we're pleased that the MTA has launched this Safety's First program aimed at improving safety, not just for our members, but for all employees."



Noting that some 3,000 employees report injuries every year, Catoe said the MTA is committed to improving on-the-job safety and making the working environment safer on board Metro Buses, in the maintenance shops and in administrative offices.

Funds budgeted to upgrade safety

His visits to operating divisions have revealed that "we have not made the proper expenditures to bring our facilities up to...modern-day standards," Catoe said. But, he said funds have been budgeted to upgrade safety of vehicles and operating facilities.

[John Roberts, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations, said the Safety's First program will be a 24-7 effort.](#)

He cited the Division 2 maintenance shop as one of the first places that will see a safety upgrade. "Contracts will be issued soon to bring that facility up to standard," he said.

Pointing at a large banner with the words, "Thank you for



another safe day...We need you back tomorrow," Catoe expressed concern about the number of injuries associated with bus operator seats.

He said the agency will look at operators seat construction and the design of the operator's compartment "...and make sure we spend the money where we should – that is, on your 'office.'"

The Deputy CEO called on employees to get involved in the Safety's First program. "I ask each of you – whether you drive every day, work on fueling and cleaning our vehicles or supervise the organization – to help us by taking the responsibility for safety. Be an individual leader in safety at work and at home."

Catoe noted that the MTA has set a goal of reducing lost-time accidents by 50 percent over the next five years. But, he said, "Our target should be no accidents, no lost time. And, when you work toward that, that's when you have a true commitment."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Members of the Division Advisory Committee and Division 3 volunteers, working with DAC coordinator Helen Ortiz, arranged the kickoff program and the barbecue. DAC members responsible for cooking and food preparation were Melvin Lesure, Socorro Mitchell, Barbara Davis, Jackie Jones, Rosalia Medina and Florence Bingham. Norma Carrasco assisted with setup of the Metro Safety wheel and provided game prizes. Division volunteers are Manny Haro, Mike Mestyaneck, Colon Gomez and Albert L. Parker, Jr.

Judges for the Safety's First game were Robert Torres, Gary Schachel, Colon Gomez, Maria Canales and Al Cote.

Division Manager Dan Frawley and Acting Maintenance Manager Gary Schachel hosted the event.

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