

CEO Report

Julian Burke, Interim Chief Executive Officer
September 25, 1997

Let me first say how much I appreciate the reception given me by the executive officers and by so many of the rest of you. Everyone has been cooperative in providing the vital information I need to get my job done. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss our situation and my immediate plans during our all-employee meeting September 3.

As I said during that meeting, my priorities remain to bring financial and organizational stability to the MTA and to restore credibility with the federal and state agencies that provide our funding and with others – municipalities, taxpayers, customers – who look to us for transportation leadership.

We have five primary tasks ahead of us. We must bring order to our budgets and our management and organization structure. We have to improve Metro Bus service, not only to meet the terms of the Consent Decree, but also because it's the right thing to do. We'll finish construction of the Metro Red Line

to North Hollywood and revise the Rail Recovery Plan required by the Federal Transit Administration.

"...when our job is done, the MTA will be in much better shape..."

These are difficult, challenging assignments. Accomplishing them will mean changes. Having done this many times before, however, I can assure you that when our job is done, the MTA will be in much better shape financially and operationally. And those who see the process through will have benefited from the experience.

Hunting for Funding

I made my first trip to Washington on the MTA's behalf, September 15. Our delegation met with key members of Congress to press for federal dollars to buy 650 new buses, complete the Metro Rail connection to North Hollywood and fund other local transportation projects.

All told, we asked for \$723 million over the next five years, which would include \$250 million to purchase new buses for the MTA and 17 local operators. We also are seeking \$271 million for highway and street improvements and \$202 million for future Metro Rail expansions into East LA, Mid-City and the San Fernando Valley.

We're optimistic about receiving much of the request because of the recent introduction in Congress of a three-year, \$103.2 billion bill called BESTEA – successor to the familiar ISTEAs. As currently written, BESTEA includes \$5.4 billion for transit in FY 1998, a significant portion of which would come to California under the new funding formulas.

I also met with Congressional leaders to discuss our FY 98 Metro Rail appropriation. The House has recommended \$76 million and the Senate has earmarked \$51 million for the Hollywood-North Hollywood Metro Rail segment. A conference committee will make the final decision soon.

LAPD, LASD to Police MTA

LAPD officers and Sheriff's deputies will provide security for Metro Buses and Trains, beginning this winter, under separate agreements approved recently by the Los Angeles City Council and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The result: a safer transit system for our customers and our employees.

Sheriff's deputies will patrol the Metro Blue and Green lines and buses outside LA city limits. The Sheriff's Department was authorized to hire 152 sworn officers and 33 civilians in a merger with the MTA Transit Police. The agency will pay the county \$17.3 million annually for security services.

The LAPD will be responsible for policing the Metro Red Line and bus lines within city limits. Under a contract with the MTA, the LAPD can hire as many as 208 sworn Transit Police officers and 30 civilians. The city will receive \$23.4 million each year from the MTA for transit security.

The LAPD and Sheriff's Department transit forces will operate from a joint command center located on the Plaza level at MTA Headquarters. Such Transit Police property as vehicles, radios, weapons and other equipment will be divided proportionally between the two police agencies.

Employees of the Month

The Employee of the Month program was one year old in August, a significant milestone for one of the best employee recognition programs the MTA sponsors. To date, more than 100 employees representing every major division have been honored.

Congratulations to our Employees of the Month for July! Ten employees, including a three-member team, can be proud of the honor given them by co-workers. They are:

Anne Adelman, Finance. An Office of Management and Budget employee, Anne is not only a financial whiz, she also works well with people at all levels within the organization. She takes the initiative to, among other efforts, serve on several employee committees.

Thomas Amiya, Communications. Thomas, a Marketing Department employee, is best known for his work on the project that put the MTA on the World Wide Web. A model of dependability, he can be depended on to assist with any project within his field of expertise.

Amjad Bhular, Administration. An Information Technology Services employee, Amjad likes to do a job right, often staying late to ensure that his department gets critical projects completed on schedule. He takes seriously his role as a team leader and member.

David Castillo, Transit Operations. Metro Buses often play "leading roles" in movies and TV commercials as a result of David's work in Operation Support Services. He also works with construction companies, municipalities and law enforcement agencies.

Toni Cottril, Metro Construction. A Quality Management employee, Toni is a highly motivated professional who, by her example of hard work and integrity, inspires others. Her contributions illustrate that she believes in putting her department goals and MTA goals first.

Carol Inge, Wanda Knight, Cosette Stark, RTP&D. A dedicated team, these three spent many late nights and weekends to ensure that the MTA's 1997 Call for Projects met the highest quality standards. The "Call" is one of the agency's most important responsibilities.

Ronald Jue, Executive Office. A Management Audit Systems employee, Ron is a perfectionist who consistently provides the best product and service possible. He gets the job done quickly and is constantly looking for opportunities to increase his contributions to the MTA.

James Linkous, Procurement. Jim is known by co-workers in Contract Administration as a problem solver. He helped successfully negotiate several major consultant and contractor awards. He is noted for his teamwork, leadership skills and boundless energy.

New CNG Buses

We're taking to the Board this month a request to purchase 223 New Flyer CNG buses at a total cost of \$79.6 million. The proposed production schedule calls for delivery of 188 buses beginning in February, 1999, at a rate of 40 buses a month. The deliveries would be completed in August, 1999.

We've recommended spending an additional \$4 million to equip the buses with automated voice systems, computerized diagnostic equipment and bicycle racks. The Board's Operations Committee also has asked us to study the impact of purchasing low-floor buses, which are easier for wheelchair patrons to board, but have fewer seats than regular coaches. Fewer seats means we'd have to buy more buses to meet the Consent Decree's passenger load requirements.

Award for Douglas/Rosecrans

Caltrans recently recognized the Metro Green Line's Douglas/Rosecrans station as the winner of the Cultural Enhancement award in the agency's 1997 Excellence in Transportation competition.

Acknowledging the "professional talent, dedication, and commitment to excellence" of those involved, Caltrans judges commented that the station design "is one that is colorful, upbeat and fun! It is an attractive place and demands the traveler's attention."

Congratulations to Metro Art Director Maya Emsden and her team, Metro Rail Construction and the station artist and architect for this fine achievement.

Legislative Report

The Assembly passed a measure (SB-89), sponsored by State Sen. Tom Hayden, that would place a \$10 limit on political contributions to Board members from companies doing business with the MTA. The bill also prevents former staff members from doing business with the agency for three years. The measure now goes back to the Senate for concurrence. The MTA supports this bill.

In local action, the Los Angeles City Council has approved payment of \$55.4 million to the MTA. The payment is the first installment on \$200 million the city had agreed to pay to cover the cost of the Metro Rail Segment 3 construction project.

And, Finally...

Oprah has come calling on the MTA again. Last spring, she featured 91-year-old Arthur Winston on her popular talk show. This time, it was Mike Stange, the "angel mechanic" who was profiled in the August issue of *Metro Family*. An MTA equipment maintenance manager who provides free auto repairs for his church's members, Mike appeared on Oprah's September 18 show.

The MTA's Diversity Task Force needs you for an AIDS walkathon on Sunday, Sept. 28. Your participation will raise urgently needed funds for those living with HIV and AIDS. Call Zahra Chawdhry at 922-5945 to register.

Metro Art's next tour of art on the Metro Rail system is scheduled at 10 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 28. MTA employees and guests are invited to attend the free event, which begins in the East Portal. Contact Metro Art at 922-4278 for information.

Editor's Note: As of September, 1997, the CEO Report will be incorporated as a column in *Metro Family*.

A publication of MTA CEO's Office

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