

METROLINK® Matters

Metrolink News and Events

March '08

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Perris Valley Line

The city of Perris welcomed its very first Metrolink train in February on what, in the not-so-distant future, will be the Perris Valley Line. The Perris Valley Line will extend the popular 91 Line 22.7 miles farther into Riverside County, offering easy access to the Inland Empire/Orange County and Riverside lines. The new line will serve Perris, the business development at March Air Reserve Base, Moreno Valley, the UC Riverside area, and the Hunter Park Business Development in northern Riverside. The line will be a great boon to Riverside commuters, who on average endure the longest commutes in the region, and will also make Riverside a more attractive site for new businesses.

With strong community support (Riverside County voters have twice approved ballot measures to provide funds to purchase Perris

Line rights-of-way), the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) is in full swing working to get the new line up and running.

In December, the RCTC received the good news that the project had received a favorable rating from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which paved the way for federal funding for the project. President Bush's recently released proposed budget for 2008-09 includes \$50 million for the Perris Valley Line project, with another \$25 million recommended to follow in 2010. (The line is one of about a dozen "Small Start" projects recommended for federal funding by the FTA.) The rest of the funding for the project, which has a total projected cost of about \$168 million, is expected to come from a combination of state, local, and other federal sources.

The FTA approval gave the project team the *(continued on page 4)*

Proposed Increase in Group Travel Program Fares

At its meeting of February 22, 2008, the Metrolink Board of Directors approved a public outreach program to request input on a proposed increase in fares for group travel. Metrolink's Group Travel Program has been in place since 2000 and currently offers a discounted fare of \$7.00 for a round trip ticket anywhere on the system for groups of 10 or more. The proposed changes to the program are as follows:

- Increase the discounted Group Travel fare for a round trip ticket from \$7.00 to \$10.00 beginning July 1, 2008
- Increase the minimum number in a group to qualify for the discounted fare from 10 to 15 beginning July 1, 2008
- Index future increases in the Group Travel fare to system-wide fare change proposals but only increase the fare when the cumulative total of increases is equal to or greater than \$1.00. *(continued on page 4)*



The Palmdale Flyer, Ready for Takeoff in April!

Starting April 2, 2008, a new shuttle service will connect Van Nuys and the Santa Clarita Valley to the L.A./Palmdale Regional Airport (PMD), where air passengers can board United Airlines flights to San Francisco International Airport, with connections worldwide.

Sponsored by Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and Los Angeles World Airports, this shuttle service will operate daily. For a limited time, it will be free of charge.

Palmdale Flyer passengers avoid the congestion, expensive parking, and lengthy security wait times of larger airports as they proceed from the bus to their gate in just a few steps.

With stops at the Van Nuys FlyAway Bus Terminal and the Via Princessa Metrolink station, the convenient shuttle service is timed to accommodate United's departures and arrivals. For more information, visit www.lawa.org/pmd or call (661) 266-7600.

A Community that Commutes Together...

As we all know, public transportation offers numerous benefits to us as individuals. Using public transit as an alternative to driving lets us save on costly automobile gas and do our part for the environment.

A key part of how this all works is community. When we choose to use public transit, we choose to share resources with others who live or work near us—and this benefits each of us individually while it benefits our local communities and the larger global community of which we're all a part. And, of course, in the case of public transit, sharing resources means sharing space.

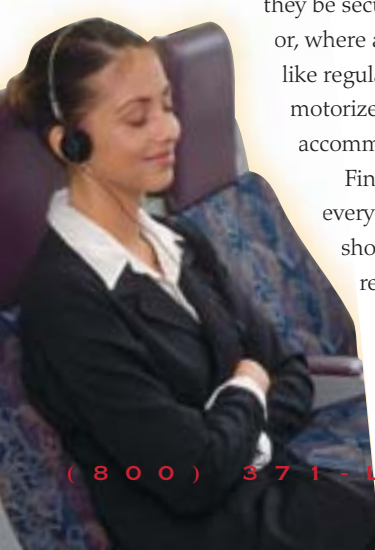
So, to ensure a pleasant commute for everyone, it's important that we're all in this together.

- Please occupy just one seat to leave plenty of room for others.
- Please store your bags under your seat if possible.
- Please note areas designated for seniors and passengers with disabilities.
- Please use headphones to listen to music or watch DVDs.
- Please try to keep cell-phone conversations quiet.
- Feel free to enjoy snacks on the train—just be sure to put any wrappers or other trash in the on-board trashcans.
- We welcome bicycles on our trains at all times, asking that they be secured with Metrolink's wheel straps

or, where applicable, folded and stored like regular carry-ons. (Sorry, surfers and motorized-bike riders—Metrolink can't accommodate your boards and bikes.)

Finally, we figure it hardly needs saying that everyone's ride is better when we all wear shoes and shirts, keep our feet off the seats, refrain from soliciting, and the like.

Thanks for being part of the Metrolink community. For more information, call 1-800-371-LINK (5465).



Blindness Support Services

Blindness Support Services Inc. uses innovative approaches to help people who are blind or visually impaired achieve independence. Based in Riverside, the organization serves people in Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles, and San Diego counties, offering training in independent-living skills such as cooking and cleaning, Braille reading, assistive technology, and more—including how to travel independently.

"Public transportation plays a major role in all of my clients' lives," says Lilly Ortiz, who works at BSS. Public transit is a key to independent mobility for the visually impaired. Several of Ortiz's students commute regularly on Metrolink, and BSS organizes an annual group field trip to San Clemente on the train. "A lot of times when people go blind, they become homebound, frightened of the world," says Ortiz's coworker, Allison Alejo. "The idea of the field trips is to get them comfortable with the world again." The group trips give Ortiz an opportunity to show clients who think they cannot manage on public transit what it's like, and a day at the beach book-ended by group rides on Metrolink shows that what it's like is easy, accessible, and fun.

"Folks want to be able to travel safely and independently," Ortiz says. First-time riders can call Metrolink in advance to request a station orientation that covers where restrooms are located, how the train system

Metrolink Is Part of Work Life and

Allison Alejo, director of resource development for Blindness Support Services Inc., values Metrolink as much in her personal life as she does on the job. Both she and her husband are concerned about the environment, so they think about how to make their lifestyle more "green." One of their latest ideas is riding Metrolink for family outings.

The Alejos—Allison and her husband plus their eight-year-old son



Close Call: Metrolink Field In

On Monday, January 28, Metrolink field inspector Jason Koble was working in Santa Ana on the Orange County Line. It was a typical afternoon, with Koble performing routine inspections in the field. But suddenly, from his truck across the street, Koble saw a man on a motorcycle plow through the lowered gates onto the train tracks, just seconds before a train.

It had rained that morning, Koble remembers, so the asphalt was probably slippery. The motorcyclist hit the gates hard, his bike went down, and he slid across one track and the median into the one of the two main tracks.

Koble "didn't have time to think" about what to do, he told *Metrolink*

Inc.

works, and more. "The personal connection is invaluable," Alejo says. Once that initial support and training is provided, people can travel independently on Metrolink and other public transit, which significantly increases their potential for employment and other opportunities.

Both Ortiz and Alejo offer these helpful points of etiquette to sighted passengers sharing the ride with people who are blind or visually impaired:

- If you see someone walking with a cane, move out of her or his way.
- If a blind or visually impaired person is coming down the aisle, be sure your feet, carry-ons, and other potential hazards are safely located out of the aisle.
- If someone who is blind or visually impaired asks for assistance, refrain from grabbing her or him, which can be startling. Simply hold out your hand and allow the person to take your elbow or arm.

In general, Ortiz says, "Most blind or visually impaired folks want to be treated just like everyone else."



Safety Matters

Over 100 Violations Observed and 60 Cited for Violations

Some drivers and pedestrians in Santa Clarita got a costly railroad-safety lesson on Thursday, February 14, when law-enforcement officers handed out citations for infractions such as rushing through lowering gates, stopping on the train tracks, or walking on the tracks.

The Southern California Rail Safety Team, made up of law-enforcement and transportation officials as well as the railroad-safety nonprofit group Operation Lifesaver, participated in the morning event. While four locomotives and a passenger car rode the rails from the Newhall Metrolink station to the Via Princessa depot, Union Pacific Railroad police, California Highway Patrol officers, and Santa Clarita Valley sheriff's deputies gave out citations or warnings at the railroad crossings. Within a 20-minute period, four drivers rushed through lowering gates at two separate railroad crossings, and a man believed to be drunk was found walking on the train tracks.

Drivers need to stay clear of the railroad tracks and wait behind the white limit lines. The bells and red flashing lights at railroad crossings mean pedestrians and drivers need to stop, not barrel through the gates. Some people just don't make that link, said Tracy Berge, Metrolink's public safety and environment manager. California leads the nation in pedestrian-versus-train fatalities, and is fourth in the U.S. for collisions at crossings. "It's the same reason people gun it when they go through a yellow light," Berge said. "The consequences are more deadly in this case."

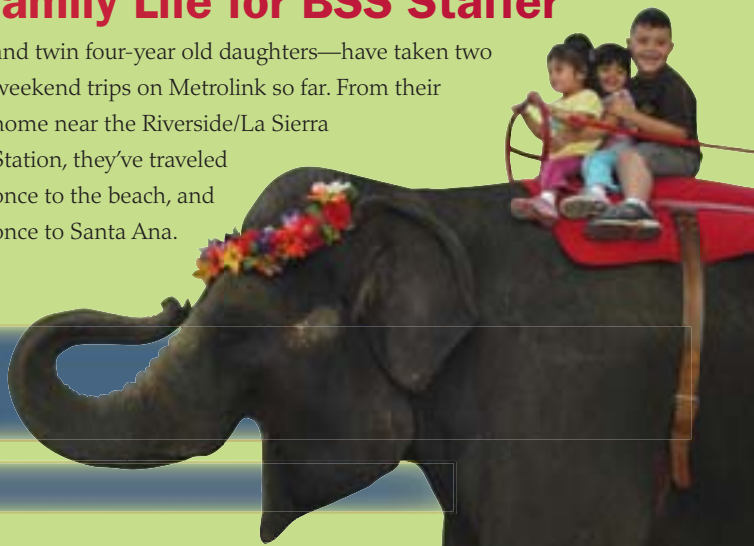
The idea was to get drivers and pedestrians to "look, listen, and live," said Terri Handlen, interim state coordinator for Operation Lifesaver, highlighting the group's slogan. "They are making decisions that could cost them their lives," Handlen said. "It's not worth it to take the chance."

—Article by Jerry Berrios. Reprinted with kind permission from the *Daily News of Los Angeles*.



Family Life for BSS Staffer

and twin four-year old daughters—have taken two weekend trips on Metrolink so far. From their home near the Riverside/La Sierra Station, they've traveled once to the beach, and once to Santa Ana.



Spector Prevents Tragedy on Tracks

Matters. He just jumped out of his truck and ran to the tracks. He pulled the motorcyclist out of the way. Another man ran over to try to pull the bike from the tracks, but Koble urged him to stay in the clear—by that time, the approaching train was very close. Seconds later, the train struck—and totaled—the motorcycle, knocking it into the path of an Amtrak train approaching on the other track. That train was stopped to avoid further damage, causing delays.

Koble pointed out that by the time the crossing gates are activated around train tracks, there is usually about 30 seconds before a train appears. So all of this—the motorcyclist's hitting the fully lowered gates, sliding

across the tracks, and being pulled off them by Koble—happened in a span of about 20 to 25 seconds. Train tracks are extremely active, and those warning gates are extremely important to heed. Whether you're a driver, pedestrian, or motorcyclist around the tracks, basic safety habits are essential: traveling at a safe speed, keeping an eye on the road ahead of you, and heeding warning signs. "A little common sense goes a long way," Koble says. And although he's modest about it—insisting his actions weren't heroic, just instinctive—a keen eye and the ability to act fast made a Metrolink employee who was simply doing his job a lifesaver.



City News

Palmdale—Spend St. Patrick's Day, March 17, with Craicmore at the Palmdale Playhouse. They have performed all over the world, from Shanghai to Hollywood. Playing contemporary traditional Celtic music with deep roots in the music of Scotland and Ireland, Craicmore features the critically acclaimed vocalist Nancy Johnston. A member of the audience will win a piece of diamond jewelry donated by William Jewelers! One dollar from every ticket purchased will support the Palmdale Playhouse Youth and Community Program. For tickets, contact the Palmdale Playhouse box office at (661) 267-5685.

Go Clippers

Metrolink passengers can SAVE 20 percent on \$35 and \$85 seats for the March 8 (Minnesota) and March 22 (Portland) games. Your Metrolink ticket provides you special savings to the L.A. Clippers games. To purchase your discount Clipper tickets, go to www.ticketmaster.com/promo/p3mvtz and use the promo code "Train" for your savings offer (while supplies last). For game information, visit www.clippers.com or call (888) 895-8662.



Metrolink, Metro, and Amtrak are the official transportation partners of the L.A. Clippers.

From Union Station, transfer free on the Metro Red or Purple Line to 7th Street/Metro Station. Then catch the Metro Blue Line to Pico/Chick Hearn Station (first stop). STAPLES Center is across the street.

If you live in the Inland Empire, avoid weekend traffic and enjoy a stress-free, comfortable ride on the San Bernardino Line Saturday trains

Perris Valley Line *(continued from page 1)*

go-ahead to begin preliminary engineering, which is now in progress. Over the next several months, they will focus on refining the project scope, including paying careful attention to cost-effectiveness. One of the primary ideas they're considering to keep project costs down is phased development of stations. Not unlike the way Metrolink began, the Perris Line might open a few stations at a time to balance costs with growing ridership, beginning with the stations likely to attract the most riders and adding stations as ridership grows. Community input will be important as the project team assesses which stations to open when. The Perris Line team at the RCTC is also looking at various potential delivery methods, including possibly partnering with Metrolink for aspects of the design/build process.

Construction is scheduled to begin during 2009, with estimated project completion by 2011. Keep abreast of new developments on the Perris Valley Line at www.perrisvalleyline.info.



...Group Travel Program Fares

(continued from page 1)

Metrolink would like to hear from you about this proposal. Please send us your comments by e-mail to metrolinkfares@scrra.net, by fax to (213) 452-0421, Attn: Group Fares or by regular mail to Metrolink, Attn: Group Fares, 700 South Flower Street, 26th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017. The Metrolink Board of Directors will receive a compilation of all comments received and a public hearing will be held by the Board at its meeting on April 25, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Please visit www.metrolinktrains.com for more information.

Saturday Afternoons with the L.A. Kings

Why not turn your Saturday afternoon into a game day? The L.A. Kings face off at 1 p.m. on March 8 against the Montreal Canadiens in an exciting match-up. Go for a ride, enjoy the game, and feast on nachos before heading home.

Don't miss out on the last L.A. Kings Hockey Night Out ticket package for the season, when the Kings face off against the Dallas Stars on Saturday, March 29, at 1 p.m! The L.A. Kings have partnered with Metrolink, Metro, and San Bernardino Associated Governments to bring you this special ticket package. The Saturday-afternoon game package includes two game tickets, two nachos, and two drinks, with prices starting at just \$52. To order your ticket package, call your Metrolink ticket representative, Daniel Smith, at (213) 742-7199 or go to www.lakings.com.

Metrolink, Metro, and San Bernardino Associated Governments are the official transportation partners of the L.A. Kings.



into downtown Los Angeles. There is a train departing from downtown Los Angeles Union Station at 11:30 p.m., so you won't have to worry about missing the train if the game goes into overtime. Your Metrolink train ticket will get you to the game and back, with no parking fees! Check your Metrolink train schedule at www.metrolinktrains.com.

Dear Readers,

This is the last issue of *Metrolink Matters* as you know it. Beginning this April we will be debuting a completely reworked *Matters* that has been retooled based upon feedback we received from several surveys and emails sent by our readers. Some columns that will be carried over into the new format, such as our safety feature, will be familiar to you, while others will be completely new.

We're very excited about this next step in the evolution of *Metrolink Matters*, and look forward to your reaction to these changes once you've had a chance to look them over. Happy reading!

METROLINK MATTERS	
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