

METROLINK MATTERS

METROLINK NEWS AND EVENTS



Weathering the Storms

Bad weather can stop a train dead in its tracks, leaving many passengers frustrated at the thought of being late to work or another final destination. But the decision to slow or stop a train instead of plowing through adverse conditions is sometimes the only safe option.

Sunny Southern California has its weather challenges, including cold, heat, fog, strong winds, and rain. Metrolink's operations team, the group responsible for train schedules, routing, and dispatching for the agency's seven service lines, works around the clock to reduce the potential impact of rail-crippling weather. The team monitors weather forecasts and develops action plans for challenging conditions.

The week of December 19 when heavy rains poured across Southern California, Metrolink temporarily suspended train operations between Rialto and Fontana on several days, because water pooled up to eight inches above the rail. The operations team ran service out of Fontana and Rancho Cucamonga and provided buses for passengers at affected stations.

Some service lines are more susceptible to bad weather than others. For example, the Antelope Valley Line experiences wind and snow, while several tunnel areas along the Ventura Line are mudslide-prone. Flooding and mudslides occur in some areas along the San Bernardino and Orange County lines.

Weather-caused service interruptions are communicated rapidly using Twitter, the Metrolink website, and our mobile site. During inclement weather, customers also can call our twenty-four-hour automated passenger information line at 800-371-5465 (LINK).

We strive to get passengers to their destinations on time, but never at the risk of safety, our core value. Sometimes the safest decision is to slow a train down, bring it to a stop, or provide alternative transportation.



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New Roles, New Members for Metrolink Board

The Metrolink Board of Directors elected a new chairman, Richard Katz, and vice chairman, Patrick J. Morris, during its January 14, 2011 meeting. The board also welcomed its newest members, Carolyn V. Cavecche and Karen Spiegel.

Katz previously served as vice chairman of Metrolink's Board and replaces former chairman Keith Millhouse. Katz, a member of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors, is a former Democratic leader in the California State Assembly, where he served for sixteen years, including ten years as chairman of the Assembly Transportation Committee. *(continued on page 6)*

A Word from the CEO

Greetings, Metrolink riders.

As we move into 2011, we are committed to delivering on the promises we made in 2010 on safety, innovation, and efficiency.

Last year, you saw proof of our intent. You witnessed the rollout of our high-tech Guardian Fleet railcars that are equipped with state-of-the-art collision-absorption technology. We also awarded a contract to Parsons Transportation Group to design and install the Positive Train Control system on our rail network, a project we hope to complete ahead of the 2015 federal deadline. And we made organizational improvements that have allowed us to operate more efficiently, as evidenced by our improved on-time performance.

A further testament to Metrolink's determination to improve your customer experience is how our employees and contractor co-workers pulled together during Christmas week to offer service in spite of the adverse weather conditions we faced when strong storms pounded our region. While other rail services canceled operations, Metrolink came up with a solution to get you to your destinations.

Metrolink wants to continue to be the answer to your transportation needs. President John F. Kennedy once said, "Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction." Metrolink's aim, under my leadership, is to keep building a solid foundation so we can continue to weather the storms. We then stand on firm ground as we go above and beyond to provide you with an excellent customer experience.

I assure you that we are continuing on our path of improvement in 2011. We need your feedback to help us become Southern California's commute of choice.




Metrolink CEO John E. Fenton

Download This!

If you are like most Metrolink riders, you do not live across the street from a station and your final stop is not within walking distance from your final destination. Connectivity across Southern California using multiple transit services can be complicated, but Metrolink is here to help. Below are some tools that can make it easier for you to get from point A to point B. You can find them on the web and check for updates by visiting metrolinktrains.com and clicking on the "Rider Apps" link under the "Rider Tools" menu.

Text Messaging

- **dadnab.com:** *Free.* Text-based multimodal trip planner.
- **lapassenger.com:** *Free.* Riders share delay and cancellation updates.

Mobile Sites for Web-Enabled Phones

- **google.com/transit:** *Free.* Itineraries, fares, and route maps.
- **railbandit.com:** *Free for six months.* Sends schedules and alerts to your phone.

iPhone Apps

- **thenexttrain.com/iphone:** *Fee.* Schedules, station information, system maps, and alerts.
- **itransitbuddy.com:** *Fee.* Search up-to-date transportation schedules.
- **moop.me/inap.php:** *Fee.* Enter your destination, take a nap, and the alarm will sound when you reach your stop.



Android Apps

- **transicast.com:** *Free.* Find routes and stations via Google Maps.

Desktop Tools

- **google.com/transit:** *Free.* Itineraries, fares, and route maps.
- **thenexttrain.com/at/metrolink:** *Free.* Schedules, alerts, and interactive station map.
- **walkscore.com:** *Free.* Compares daily commute options.

FOR DEVELOPERS: Metrolink encourages software developers to create applications for our public transit customers. We make it easy by publishing our official train schedules in the Google General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) format, an open-data format standard for transit agencies, and providing the data to all on our "Developer Resources" webpage.

Please note: Metrolink cannot endorse or provide support for any of these apps, and is not responsible for the content or accuracy of the data.



METROLINK SAFETY ALWAYS MATTERS

Working on the Railroad

Contractors are busy maintaining Metrolink track, improving crossings, building new siding, and upgrading a major tunnel. With all these workers on the railroad, how do we ensure their safety and yours?

We have established a rigorous safety program with layers of training and protection measures. This meets not only Federal Railroad Administration requirements but also our own high standards.

When choosing contractors, we require railroad experience, and many have Metrolink-specific experience. Each contractor must submit its own railroad safety program for our approval.

In addition, anyone who works on railroad right-of-way—contractor or Metrolink employee—must take a four-hour Roadway Worker Protection or Third-Party Contractor course and pass a certification test annually.

For example, the construction management company J.L. Patterson & Associates plays a key role in ensuring worker

protection during construction. This Metrolink contractor provides an “employee in charge,” and flaggers to watch for trains on our construction sites.

The employee in charge conducts daily briefings with workers about the limits of protection for that day, which tracks are involved in work, and any trains scheduled. He or she stays in contact with dispatchers, is alerted about any approaching trains, and sounds a loud on-site air horn to warn workers.

J.L. Patterson also provides protection for construction projects adjacent to Metrolink right-of-way that require special attention.

It is our goal to upgrade and maintain Metrolink tracks and facilities with minimal disruption to trains, and to provide for the protection of workers involved.



Customer Commentaries

Metrolink Matters will share feedback from you on what passengers are talking about out there on the rails. We will reprint quips from your letters and e-mails—and even your Twitter, Facebook, and other social media comments ... so keep 'em coming!

We heard from several Antelope Valley Line riders dismayed by a cluster of mechanical and communication failures on January 14. One said:

“This morning, my train from Acton, the 206, was canceled. There was no notification of this at the station, and if it had not been for one of the passengers going on Twitter, we would have not known what was going on. Consequently, I did not get to work until 9:57 instead of 8:19. I find this wholly unacceptable service. I also object to the information being only on Twitter. I do not use Twitter on my phone nor does my employer allow it on our computers.”

We were able to continue to post updates via Twitter for those who follow us there, can view the feed on our website home page or have access to our Metrolink Mobile site.

We were not able to post information in a timely manner on station marquees due to the power failure. Although conductor announcements were made at the time, we are looking into the reason why several customers did not hear the announcements.



Ask the CEO

CEO John E. Fenton reads all of your e-mails and occasionally his answers will be published in Metrolink Matters. All e-mails are forwarded to Passenger Services for immediate review and, if required, resolution. This is part of his promise to provide excellent customer service. Please write him at johnfenton@scrra.net.

For issues requiring immediate attention, please call 800-371-5465(LINK) or submit a comment via metrolinkcontactus.com.

Eliminate Metrolink diesel-electric trains. They are gross polluters and idle needlessly for long periods of time at Union Station. They fill Union Station with diesel smog and soot. It is also terrible along the freeway whenever these Metrolink commuter trains pass by. These trains need to be eliminated and replaced with pure electric trains.

We share your concern for the environment and are taking many steps to become greener in our operations.

In April, Metrolink began shutting down main and head-end engines when not in use. This fuel conservation and emissions reduction initiative has saved approximately 45,000 gallons of fuel per month since implementation. Metrolink has also added Automatic Engine Start-Stop systems to twenty-two locomotives and will install these systems on ten additional locomotives. These systems eliminate unnecessary idling, further reducing emissions and fuel consumption.

In the past two years, Metrolink has added fifteen cleaner, more fuel-efficient locomotives to our fleet. Currently, Metrolink is aggressively seeking funding to upgrade all locomotives in our fleet to the cleanest locomotives. Transportation funding is scarce, but we are working diligently with available resources to implement many environmentally friendly practices.

Conductors and Engineers: Who Does What?

If you do not work in the railroad industry or are not a frequent rider, chances are you do not know the difference between a conductor and an engineer. You may see your conductor dressed in slacks, a dress shirt, and a coat heading down the aisle asking for tickets. Your engineer is busy in the cab car, rarely seen. These two have very specific and different duties.

Conductors maintain constant communication with engineers and other crew members to ensure safe train operation. Conductors not only work aboard trains, but they also perform duties that may require them to leave the train for extended periods. For example, they inspect the inside and outside of train cars and troubleshoot equipment when necessary.

Conductors also are responsible for verifying that passengers have valid tickets and issuing warnings or citations to riders who do not show valid proof of payment. They make frequent customer service announcements about departures, arrivals, and delays. In addition, conductors write a variety of incident reports describing everything from delays to mechanical defects.



Did you know that part of a conductor's job is overseeing all on-board crew members?



Far from distractions, an engineer is seated in the cab where he concentrates on safely operating the train.

Engineers are responsible for safely operating the train, adhering to signals, complying with movement orders, and communicating movement plans to other crew members. They stay in constant contact with the Metrolink operations team, including dispatchers. Like conductors, engineers walk between and around the train cars and locomotives to inspect and troubleshoot equipment, and they also submit mechanical-defect reports.

These highly trained professionals must complete continuous rigorous training programs and undergo random efficiency testing to ensure compliance with rules and regulations. So the next time you board a Metrolink train, just know that your friendly conductor and engineer are highly qualified crew members there to keep you safe.

Watching the Clock, With You in Mind

Metrolink's systemwide on-time performance has risen steadily over the past year. Excepting delays caused by external forces, the percentage of on-time trains has risen from the low 90s to the high 90s. But our efforts to drive up that statistic never cease.

"One of our singular focuses is on-time performance because that's what customers want—to be on time," explains Bob Berger, Metrolink's service design manager. "We continue to look at opportunities to improve."

Berger explains that Metrolink improved on-time performance by attending to key issues that impact performance, in an initiative that began in May 2010. These fall into five primary categories:

Mechanical conditions: Staff identified locomotives prone to breakdowns, and spent extra time inspecting them and fixing any issues. On passenger cars, doors are the most likely culprit in delays, so mechanics zeroed in on that mechanism.

Station issues: Staff investigated delays in passenger boarding and disembarking. For older loaner cars that require doors to be opened manually, Metrolink added conductors to help open doors quickly. Americans with Disabilities Act issues were reviewed to ensure efficient boarding of disabled passengers.

Rail coordination: Metrolink maintains close communications with freight railroads with which we share tracks to help avoid conflicts that may slow Metrolink trains.

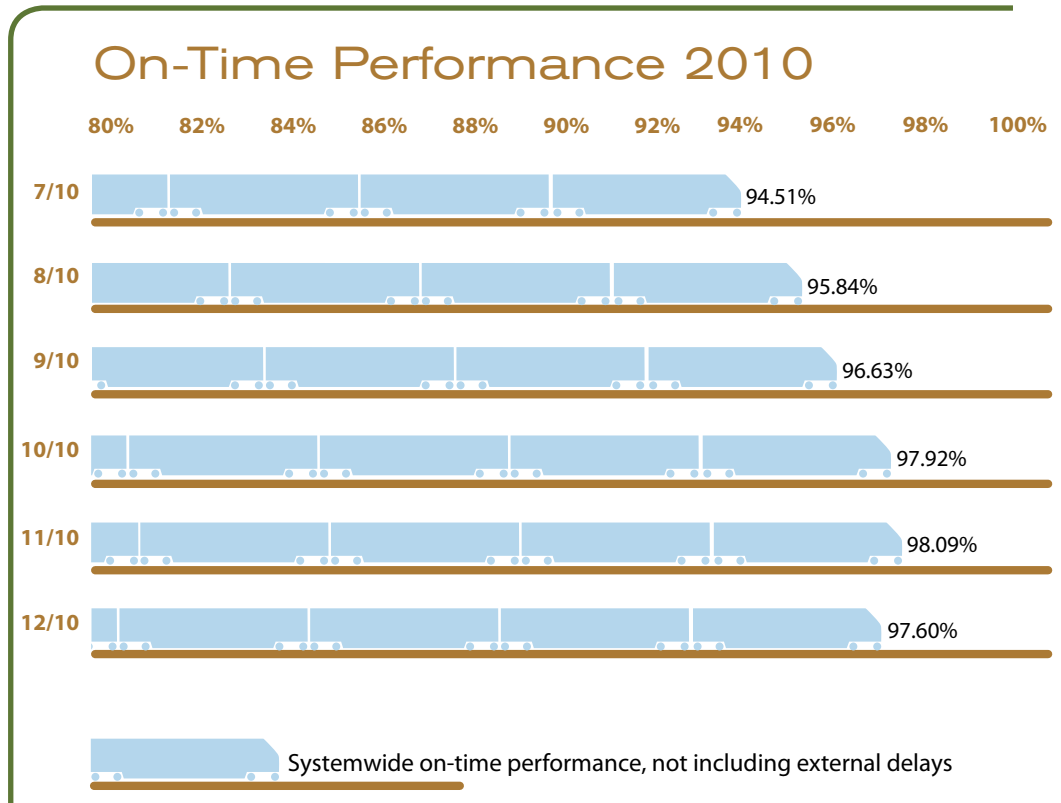
Track and signals: We increased efforts to evaluate construction projects and potential impacts on delays.

Schedules: We carefully scrutinize our schedules, train by train, to address any conflicts and make adjustments.

Metrolink counts any train that arrives at its final destination within five minutes of its scheduled arrival on time. By November 2010, Metrolink hit an overall on-time performance rate of 96.75 percent. When delays caused by external forces such as trespasser incidents and extreme weather were deleted, on-time performance hit 98.09 percent.

December 2010 was drenched with record-setting rainstorms, so systemwide on-time performance dropped to 93.06 percent. Our on-time rate, excluding delays due to the impact of storms and other external events, rose to 97.6 percent.

"We hear you, the customer," Berger says. "We know this is one of the most important things to you, and we've made it one of the most important things to us."



Making Headway, Metrolink CEO John Fenton's update to agency stakeholders is available to all. This electronic publication contains timely information on Metrolink initiatives, projects and policy. Sign up for your bi-weekly update at metrolinktrains.com/e-newsletter



Meet the Metrolink Team: Jeri Blair

When Jeri Blair was recruited as a railroad industry clerk in 1969 after earning her business degree from Heald College, never did she imagine that she would become a female trailblazer in an industry then dominated by men.

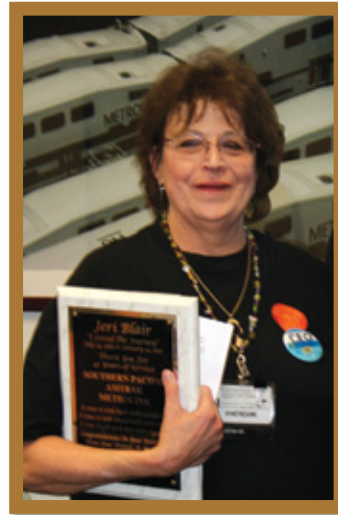
"Women were expected to stay home," explains Blair, recalling society's expectations for women during her childhood and early adulthood. But later, those views gradually changed.

And Blair was ready for change. "I didn't want to settle as a clerk. Back then, a

clerk was the bottom rung of the railroad. I always wanted more. I wanted to be an engineer, but they spent too much time away from home," she says. "It was never about money. It was about being the best."

She rose through the ranks to become a highly esteemed dispatcher. After working as a steno clerk and an ink clerk, Blair took the test to become a train dispatcher and passed with flying colors. She was promoted to dispatcher on November 8, 1972, a date forever etched in her memory.

Blair at first met much resistance from male colleagues. "They didn't want a woman telling them what to do, so I outsmarted them and started speaking in a lower, more authoritative voice until I gained their respect," she says.



During her career, she managed to gain a couple of friendly monikers. One was "Queen of the Valley," because her male colleagues grew to like her voice and regarded her as the best in the business.

Reflecting on her forty-one-year railroad career, Blair counts a few accomplishments: becoming a dispatcher, her career longevity, and

proving that a woman can dispatch as well as a man. "I wanted to be the best and earn the reputation," she says.

"It was never about money. It was about being the best!"

Blair retired January 14 after fourteen years of dispatching Metrolink trains and plans to get some well-deserved rest. But she will never lose her fondness for the rails. "Railroading is in my

blood, and every time I see a train or hear a far-off whistle blow, it will tug at my heart," she says.



Blair at the old Southern Pacific train dispatching offices in Los Angeles

New Roles, New Members for Metrolink Board (continued from page 1)

Patrick J. Morris has served as mayor of San Bernardino since February 2006. He is a member of the San Bernardino Associated Governments Board and serves on its Major Projects and Commuter Rail committees. He is also an Omnitrans Board member and serves as chairman of its Planning and Productivity Committee. Morris began his law career with the San Bernardino County District Attorney's office. In 1976 he was appointed to the Superior Court Bench. He acted as presiding judge of the county's juvenile court from 1984 to 1989.



Richard Katz

The Orange County Transportation Authority appointed Carolyn V. Cavecche, elected mayor of the city of Orange, to the Metrolink Board to replace Art Brown, who retired in December 2010. During her time as an OCTA Board member, she served as vice chairwoman and chairwoman. Her career as a member of the Orange City Council began in 2001.

New board member Karen Spiegel, a Corona councilwoman, was elected to her first council term in 2002 and has served as mayor of Corona twice. Prior to being elected to the city council, she was city treasurer from 1996 to 2002.



Patrick J. Morris

Two additional Board members are scheduled to be selected. Check metrolinktrains.com for updates.

METROLINK MATTERS

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