

Expo shutterbug says so long

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Dwight Sturtevant, aka Expo Line Fan, on the other side of the camera with Metro's crash dummy, Ms. Deb.

By profession, he's a television engineer. But when he dons a fluorescent yellow vest and picks up his Canon EOS 40D camera, Dwight Sturtevant transforms into...Expo Line Fan.

At least he did until this week.

After nearly three years of chronicling the second, final phase of the Expo Line light rail project down to the last rivet and rebar, Sturtevant is leaving town for a new job in Ohio—and leaving behind a project he has documented in thousands of images and nearly three dozen videos since 2010.

Through it all, Sturtevant has worked anonymously and without compensation, with public credit for his photos going simply to "Expo Line Fan," if it was given at all. But now, at last, his story can be told.

"I am just a rail fan who has been unofficially the project photographer," the prolific volunteer said recently as he took a break from packing for the move. "I've had a free hand."

Using his own photo equipment and wearing a Metro safety vest and a hard hat he purchased himself, Sturtevant has become a familiar figure on construction sites all along the 6.6-mile stretch where work is now underway to extend Expo from Culver City to Santa Monica.

His photos have appeared on Metro's blog [The Source](#), on the project's [website](#), on Supervisor Yaroslavsky's [website](#), in [construction trade journals](#) and on his own voluminous [photo-sharing site](#).

"We use his pictures even in our office. It's just built so much enthusiasm," said Skanska USA Civil Executive Vice

President Mike Aparicio, who added that Sturtevant’s outlook on the project has rubbed off on the whole Expo team. “When they see that kind of enthusiasm, they just feed on it.”

“He’s done a great job of capturing key milestones and highlighting progress,” Gabriela Collins, Expo’s government/community relations manager, said in a statement. “We thank him for sharing his wonderful photos and wish him well!”

While others have chronicled Expo’s progress in photographs, “Dwight has taken more than anybody,” and got unique shots because of his access to the construction process, said Darrell Clarke, a founder and co-chair of [Friends 4 Expo Transit](#), longtime advocates for the project. “I’ve enjoyed his passion for following the project,” Clarke said.

Since his photo odyssey began, he has regularly delivered his copious output to the contractor, [Skanska USA](#), to the Expo Construction Authority and to the Metro Library’s archives. It adds up: “If you figure every week since 2010, 200 pictures every week—do the math. It comes out to a lot of pictures.”



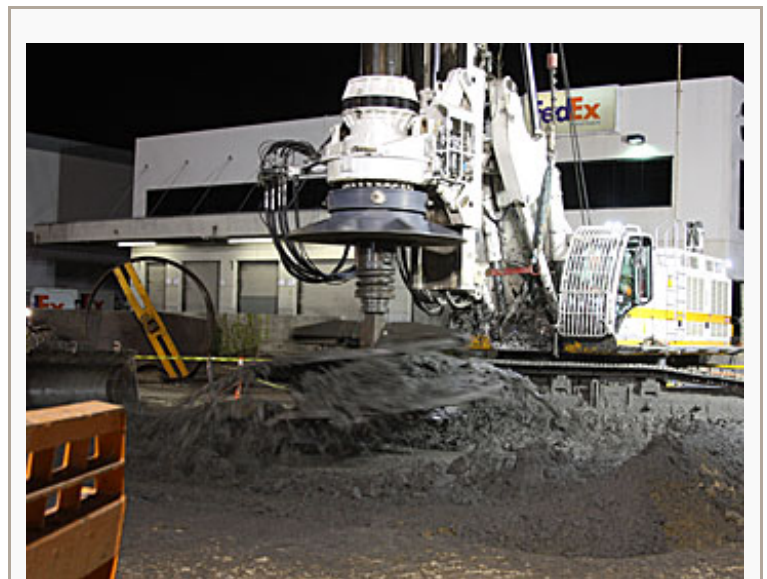
On the job at the future Westwood Station.
Photo/Dwight Sturtevant for Expo and Metro

His connection to the project began—as so many L.A. adventures do—with a search for an alternate route. He was commuting at the time between downtown Los Angeles and the airport area and started to use Flower Street and Exposition Boulevard to get home. “And that’s when I went, ‘Wow, they’re building a light rail project.’”

When the company he was working for relocated to New Mexico, Sturtevant had more time on his hands and he was able to devote two days a week to photographing Expo.

“Over the last 2½ years, I’ve gotten the respect of Skanska where they’ve allowed me access to the project. Metro’s given me access to do certain things because I’ve earned the trust slowly, proved I wasn’t some nutcase,” he said.

He’s also become a familiar face to Metro’s train operators. For the past two years, he’s been printing up large posters with collages of his photographs to show them the project’s progress. He dropped off his last one at the 7th Street Metro Center last week, with a note: “To all my friends at Metro, I will miss you...I hope you have enjoyed the photos. Dwight S., aka the Expo Line Fan.”



One of his favorites: time lapse shot of drilling for the Venice Boulevard Bridge.
Photo/Dwight Sturtevant for Expo and Metro

Sturtevant, 51, said he has boyhood memories of looking at freight trains with his grandfather. His rail enthusiasm, literally, came with the territory: “I grew up in Boston. We had the first subway system in the country.”

His wife isn’t so keen on his hobby, however. He said her attitude is best summed up as: “If you’ve seen one train you’ve seen ‘em all.”

But he views his Expo work as a chance to make a difference, and to be an eyewitness to the construction of a light rail project that, in part, moves along the same route once traveled by the city’s late, lamented [Red Cars](#).

“There’s not many places in the country where you’re able to watch cities regain what they’ve lost,” he said. “I mean, L.A. had all this once, and then we lost it.”

Sturtevant said he will be back for the project’s grand opening in 2015, and sooner if he can. In any case, the move to Ohio—where he’ll work for a mobile TV company that records professional sporting events—has at least one advantage for a train buff.

“The house has a big basement,” he said. “I’m going to be able to put my model railroad back up.”



The Venice Boulevard Bridge, under construction last week. Photo/Dwight Sturtevant for Expo and Metro

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