

A weekly report  
from the office  
of the CEO

December 5, 1994



I understand there was a lot of concern from non-contract staff during this week's presentations on the ancillary benefits package.

Please know that this is a program designed for the long-term. The package was not intended to focus on short term issues, like what happens if you get sick in January when you haven't accumulated any TOWP time-off but, rather was meant to address the long term.

Many of the questions at the meetings had to do with the part of the policy that says existing sick and vacation time is frozen as of Dec. 31. This obviously is going to be a problem if, for instance, you need three days of sick time in January, or have planned a two-week vacation for that month. Since the TOWP time-off days earned for the year are not given to you in advance — they are accumulated as you go along — no one will have enough days to take much time off the first several months. And, that's exactly why Administrative Services is designing a transitional policy that will allow you to dip into the two frozen banks under these circumstances. This week the executive officers will discuss with the chief administrative officer how the policy will be implemented.

#### Package Must Be Fiscally Sound

So, of course, you can take your vacation in January. Please know that I want to put in place a program that improves morale. Remember, however, any benefits program has to make good business sense — I believe this one, adopted by the Board, is similar to benefit programs offered by some of the most innovative companies in the private sector.

#### Suggested Ways of Enhancing our Image

Speaking of morale at the MTA, at the last meeting of the CEO Advisory Committee, a subcommittee,

called the external relations/image task force, offered several suggestions as to how we could spruce up our image. In a nutshell, the group proposed that the MTA proactively highlight our positive effect on the environment and acknowledge the many individuals within the agency who make it all happen.

Some of their excellent suggestions include:

- Develop a new corporate slogan, perhaps through an employee contest similar to the highly successful one that was used to pick a Green Line theme.
- Use the Metro prefix for all of our programs, not just for the bus and rail system. For instance, our hugely popular freeway service patrol should be called the Metro Freeway Service Patrol. That would further establish and cement an MTA identity.
- During the period a customer is on hold on our phone information lines, use those blank seconds to tout MTA accomplishments with a pre-recorded message.
- Install video monitors in rail stations that highlight our programs.
- Promote our own accomplishments on car cards on the inside of buses. Also, introduce our operators on car cards.

I very much appreciated the session and have directed several staffers to look into implementing as many of the above suggestions as possible.

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## **Brown Bag with Customer Relations**

Last week I had the pleasure of joining in a brown bag lunch with employees of the Customer Relations Department. They told me many things about which I was unaware: that in this county we are second only to the phone company in the number of calls handled; that our phone operation is visited frequently by business representatives from other states who see our state-of-the-art automated computer system as a model to be copied; that recently organizers of the '96 Olympic games in Atlanta have come here to learn how to install such a system. Also, during the lunch, I sat in on several phone calls between operators and customers. I was tremendously impressed!

My next brown bag is Dec. 9 with the MIS Department.

## **Drug Testing Information Sessions**

Much thanks to Human Resources' Nina Capoccia and Luanna Urie who last week completed 51 employee information and 10 supervisory sessions on the new drug and alcohol policy. The two traveled system-wide in October and November to explain the details of the policy, which goes into effect on Jan. 1. If for some reason you didn't catch a presentation, videotapes on the policy are available at every division. They are also available at Human Resources' two locations in the 425 and 818 Buildings. Leila Procopio, assistant director of human resources, will be ironing out details of the implementation procedures with union leadership in the next week.

## **Employee Holiday Party**

Some of you wondered whether there would be an employee holiday party before Christmas as we've done in previous years. The answer is yes. The date is tentatively set for Dec. 23. The particulars are being worked on as this issue goes to press.

## **Gas Detection System**

Some good news to report about our gas detection system in the Red Line tunnels that had come under some media scrutiny. Following an extensive review, the chief of the county's toxics epidemiology program, Dr. Paul J. Papanek, Jr., concluded that although passengers might occasionally catch a whiff of gaseous odor "such episodes would not likely exceed the hydrogen sulfide standard or present a public health threat."

He also noted that the MTA's current gas detection system provides early warning of gas intrusion and rapid response of both gas evacuation equipment and safety personnel.

## **Bike Ride with the Mayor**

Our David Wilson in Marketing continues to sign up MTA employees and their families to join the mayor on his monthly community bike ride. We published details in an earlier *CEO Report*, but the exact route has changed a bit.

The route will be about 22 miles in length with an average speed of 14 miles an hour. It will commence from CSUN westbound along Lassen St., and wind up in the CSUN parking lot. There will be a rest break midway through the ride at Warner Park.

The ride will have LAPD escorts. Participants must be at least 12 years old and wear approved helmets. For more information, contact David at 4-7249.

## **Open Enrollment Forms Due**

Just a reminder for non-contract employees that if you've decided to change any part of your insurance plan, forms are due in Ed Paull's office no later than Dec. 9. Also, those employees making no changes in their plans, but wanting to enroll in a flexible spending account, must do so by the 9th.

If you don't smoke, and want to increase your life insurance by \$5,000, a form must be returned as well. That form must be renewed during each open enrollment period. Please contact Ed Paull at 2-7180; Anne Craver at 2-7186; or Ed Myatt at 2-7185 if you need additional information.

- Franklin White

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*I welcome your comments and questions in response to **CEO Report**, which is designed to provide employees with direct communication with my office. Please contact either of my Special Assistants, Michael Gonzalez at 244-7476, or Phyllis Tucker at 244-6191. Also, employees can fax comments to 244-6014.*

## **A publication of the MTA CEO's Office**

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