

REPORT

A weekly report
from the office
of the CEO

May 9, 1994



The building of the new public transit and headquarters buildings has come under fire from some local papers in the last couple of weeks. Here is a little discussed perspective:

Contrary to what has been reported, there is no additional drain on the MTA's operating budget. This agency now spends about \$12 million per year in rent to house a staff of 2,300 at two locations. Approximately this same annual amount will be used instead to finance a long-term bond to pay for the new building's construction and furnishings. When the building is paid for in less than 18 years, the cost will be roughly what the agency would have spent in rent for the same period. The big difference is we will own it. Over the long haul, we will be ahead.

The Union Station Gateway Project is a joint development project, involving the public and private sector. As an eventual transit hub, the venture will provide for urban renewal and revitalization of an undeveloped area, which is the gateway to East Los Angeles.

EEO to Conduct Predicate Hearings Next Month

In other news, the agency is about to launch public hearings on its soon-to-be completed "Predicate Study" — that will determine the evidentiary basis for the minority and women business program.

The study, under the direction of Gwendolyn Williams, acting director of equal opportunity, involved reviewing the history of contract awards, the availability of contracts for minority and women businesses, and gathering anecdotal data.

Predicate hearing dates are scheduled in each supervisory district during a three-week period next month. The dates are Thursday, June 2; Thursday, June 9; Saturday, June 11; Thursday, June 16; and Thursday, June 23. The hearings will feature testimony from representatives of

the business community regarding their experiences in this marketplace. Two Board members or their representatives are scheduled to be present at the hearings.

This public hearing process is intended to provide the agency with an opportunity to evaluate a broad range of remedies. The hearings will act as a catalyst for the development, if necessary, of a workable and legally defensible program to improve the utilization of minority and female businesses.

Thanks to Scheduling and Operations Planning

Speaking of the Board hearings, I want to thank Steve Parry and his Scheduling and Operations Planning staff for the outstanding job they did preparing for the public hearing last April. Their work was the culmination of months of preparation and included the development of staff presentations. They also spent hours simplifying complex material and maps and putting them into understandable form for those who attended.

I understand that 10 of his people continue to sift through and evaluate the letters they've received.

The Business of Thanking Employees

Please know that I appreciate greatly what each of you is contributing to the betterment of transportation in the county. Last week we singled out two departments for a job well done. Naming people and departments can always be a bit sticky, because we're bound to leave someone out. In fact, shortly after the last newsletter was published, Phyllis received a letter with a list of all departments which had worked together at the public hearing. Why wasn't everybody acknowledged?, the writer wondered.

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Obviously, countless staffers in every department are responsible for fulfilling the MTA's mission. We try to move quickly in delivering the message around here. That's the purpose of this report. We hope to mention many of you in subsequent issues as more projects move forward. The alternative would be not to mention any of you at all. I think the result would be a very stiff, impersonal newsletter, which is certainly not the atmosphere I'm trying to cultivate.

Agency in Transition

On that note, I'd like to talk about this agency as it goes through a transition. I've told many of you that I believe it will be a minimum of three years before we reach stability. And, because uncertainty produces anxiety, our uncertain financial future will continue to undermine morale.

Despite this, we need as an organization to plan beyond the crisis and to look at the future positively. That's in part what the Total Quality Management (TQM) effort does with its emphasis on internal productivity and with pushing authority and responsibility further down the chain of command. If we do this well, it will give our employees a sense of empowerment and our product will be better for it.

It also is important that, in times of change, managers deliver messages honestly, consistently and clearly. Employees in the organization may need to hear a message over and over again before they believe that this time, the call for change is not a passing fancy. It takes time for us to hear, understand and believe the message. And, if we don't like what we hear, then it takes even more time for us to come to terms with the concept of change.

Employee Activities is in 425 Building

On a lighter note, I understand there's some uncertainty from employees in the 818 Building as to the whereabouts of the Employee Activities Center. Under the direction of Diane Delaney-Talton, it is located on the second floor of the 425 Building; a satellite office will be opened in the 818 Building within a couple of months.

Tee and sweatshirts, a variety of logo items, from lapel pins to ink pens, caps and greeting cards are available. As we head into the summer season, you may want to check the center's ticket price discounts, especially for local amusement parks. Tickets to concerts and plays that are often sold out elsewhere are frequently

available for purchase. And, here's something to consider — for \$2, employees can enter a ticket lottery for unsold tickets. On the afternoon of an event, the Center will randomly select an employee with seats for two!

Employee Activities, which is self-supporting, handles about 250 calls and makes 100 sales a day. There is also a mobile van, staffed by John Hargrove, which makes the rounds at the operating divisions and Transit Police headquarters.

A film-processing service also is available. The Center runs the MTA golf, bowling and softball clubs. If you're interested, call Diane at 2-4744.

Another Tunnel Breakthrough

Another Red Line milestone to report. Last week, a subway crew pushed through the final wall of dirt separating the tunnel beneath Vermont Avenue from the future Wilshire/Vermont station. It marked the completion of the first of four tunnel segments that eventually will connect the future Hollywood/Highland and Wilshire/Vermont stations, as well as four stations in between — a total distance of about 4.6 miles.

Excavation of Segment 2 is about 60 percent complete.

Congratulations, Clara!

Finally, my sincere congratulations to Media Relations' Clara Potes-Fellow, who recently published a book celebrating the lives of outstanding Hispanic women. With the help of a number of MTA staffers contributing to the book, Clara profiles five women in history who, she believes, make outstanding role models for Hispanic women today. The book will be featured in libraries throughout the Los Angeles Unified School system.

- Franklin White

*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.*

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