

CEO Report

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Linda Bohlinger, Chief Executive Officer

This is my first CEO Report as your Interim CEO. My commitment is to provide you with frequent updates on MTA activities, programs and policies. Let me know if this CEO Report is useful to you.

I'm proud that we have a tradition of management-employee communications at the MTA that includes Metro Family, the CEO Report, CEO Hot Line, division employee appreciation days, brown-bag lunches with the CEO and the CEO Advisory Group, among other efforts. I intend to carry on these traditions because I believe they help us reach our main goal - serving our customers better.

State Senate Hearing

The State Senate Transportation Committee is gathering information regarding the MTA. During a hearing at Headquarters, January 28, the senators said that they may take legislative action this session to change the membership of the agency's Board or our organizational structure. Senate and Assembly Committees often hold hearings before introducing bills affecting organizations.

Some senators believe Board members should be elected from districts within Los Angeles County. Others think they should be appointed, but that the 13-member Board should be reduced. There was talk of splitting the agency into separate groups for planning, rail construction and transit operations, but that is unlikely. There was even discussion about placing the MTA in temporary receivership, with an individual or small group appointed to run the agency, also unlikely.

Board Chairman Larry Zarian, myself, and many of the MTA's top executives were on hand to answer the committee's questions. The State Auditors, as well as members of the public, including the Bus Riders Union, also testified before the committee.

My view is that the MTA came across as under control, with a stable staff leadership team in place. Senator Kopp, Chair of the Committee, complimented us by saying that he thought we answered the Committee's questions in a truthful and straightforward manner.

A Board reorganization bill will not detract us from our mission of moving 1.2 million passengers a day, building our rail system, and planning transportation services for the region. I'll continue to work closely with our government relations staff and others to make sure that the concerns of our employees and our customers are heard in any discussions about these potential Board reorganization bills.

Board Action Summary

The Board took action on several items in January I believe will be of particular interest to many of you:

- The Board awarded the construction management contract for the Metro Red Line Eastside Extension to JMA Joint Venture. Work on the project will begin this year. The line is scheduled to open in November, 2004.
- Board members approved a special, two-month promotion of the On-Time Guarantee Program for Metro Bus service. The promotion will be announced to the public this month and will be in effect during March and April. Customers will receive either a free ride or a refund if a bus is 10 or more minutes late. You'll get more details on the program very soon.
- The Board awarded a contract for development of standards for signs and graphic messages in our bus and rail systems.

Having a uniform signage system will help us to more clearly communicate directions, safety advice and other transit information to our customers. The new signs will be especially helpful to disabled passengers and to those who speak neither English nor Spanish.

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- Finally, the Board's Executive Management Committee carried over until its February meeting a proposal of interest to many non-represented employees. The proposal calls for the MTA to pay the OASDI portion of Social Security for those employees who were to transfer into PTSC (Public Transportation Services Corporation) on Jan. 1, 1997. We are making progress working with PERS and I'll keep you posted as these issues continue to develop.

Tunnel Vision

If you have access to the Internet, either at home or at your worksite, you can now follow the daily progress of Metro Rail construction, including how far the tunneling machines have advanced. The daily Metro Rail construction report provides current information on tunneling activities, station construction and even street restoration.

Just click on "Metro Construction" on the MTA's Internet web page at www.mta.net. You also can access our web site from the MTA library on the 15th floor at Headquarters, and at most public libraries.

As this is written, the MTA's web site shows that the east tunnel under the Santa Monica Mountains has progressed 5,399 feet and the west tunnel 4,915 feet. Tunneling machines are presently located in the vicinity of Woodrow Wilson Drive. The Metro Red Line Hollywood/Vine project has reached 81 percent completion, and the restoration of Vermont Avenue will begin in April.

Thanks to Metro Rail Construction and ITS for making this information available to all of us and to the general public.

A Real Joy Ride

For most of our customers, a ride on an MTA bus or train is a routine occurrence. For 21-year-old John Marisi, a recent bus and rail trip was the thrill of a lifetime. John is afflicted with a terminal disease, neurofibromatosis. He's deaf, nearly blind and paralyzed.

John loves public transportation. He collects bus and rail schedules and quizzes the staff at Children's Hospital, where he's a patient, about transit systems they have ridden. Because of his passion for transit, our Customer Relations Department recently arranged a special VIP tour for the young man.

Operator of the Year Sterling Hampton met John and an entourage of friends, family, MTA staff and news media at Children's Hospital and drove them in an MTA bus to the Central Control Facility for a private tour. Customer Relations Representative Yvonne Price, who arranged the tour, interpreted for John in sign language.

The tour continued on the Metro Blue Line and Red Line to the Vermont station where a bus took John back to the hospital where he is to soon undergo another of the many operations he has endured. Our thanks to Yvonne Price, Sterling Hampton, Warren Stockton, A.J. Taylor, Verena Stewart and the Division 5 staff for making John's wish come true.

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to the first Employees of the Month for 1997! I was very impressed with the caliber of the seven employees selected for honors in January and I know there are many more like them who deserve recognition.

If you haven't nominated a co-worker for Employee of the Month, I hope you'll do so. You can even nominate someone outside your department who should be recognized for his or her work. I also want to encourage more nominations from managers. Forms are available in the kitchen of every work-site. It's an excellent way to let someone know you appreciate their work and dedication.

The seven Employees of the Month for January are:

Cheryl Broussard, Equal Opportunity Programs. The Executive Office representative, Cheryl is manager of the Contract Compliance Unit. She was instrumental in developing a format for improving the MTA's reports to the FTA. It was so good, the FTA has asked to use it as a model other transit agencies can utilize.

Eck Chaiboonma, Southeast Area Team. An RTP&D employee, Eck helped the MTA establish the Fuel Cell Buyers Consortium, a private, non-profit corporation that's a partnership of public, private, and new technology research and development groups. He was key in obtaining grants to fund this important program.

Carolyn Flowers, Transit Operations. As a senior analyst for the Southern Region, Carolyn played an integral part in developing a plan to achieve ADA compliance. In this multi-level task, her teamwork and creativity helped generate a plan that covered training, technology, labor relations, customer relations and customer outreach.

Rahmapolla Kangarloo, General Services. The Administration representative, "Rahm" is being recognized for his hard work and dedication. He's always the first to respond to service calls or complaints. He never hesitates to lend a helping hand to colleagues, a sign of his commitment to his department and to the MTA.

Stephanie Kaping, Metro Rail Construction. Stephanie has excelled in the "behind the scenes" work for the Construction Safety Department. She strives consistently to produce the highest quality of work, never hesitating to assist others in completing projects. She is a strong, positive influence among her colleagues.

Steve Phillips, Customer Relations. The representative for Communications, Steve developed a computer local area network (LAN) for his department, a project that has improved day-to-day operations. He's currently working on a more sophisticated customer complaint system that will permit "real time" reporting of complaints.

Samuel Zuniga, Finance. An employee of the Revenue Department stockroom, Samuel is a true advocate of the department's mission to provide MTA sales vendors with superior service and support. His work ethic makes a positive impact on his co-workers and he's always willing to go the extra mile to accomplish tasks.

Final Words

I would like to express to Communications Executive Officer Rae James, Customer Relations Director Scott Mugford, and to many others, our congratulations for the success of last week's Customer First Conference. Almost 300 people from transit properties across the nation and here locally attended the two-day event.

The conference gave us an opportunity to learn from world-renowned experts in leadership and customer satisfaction. It also was a great way to re-emphasize our own commitment to customer service.



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