

MTA

CEO Report

Linda Bohlinger, Chief Executive Officer
March 10, 1997

By the time you read this issue of the CEO Report, I expect to be in Washington, D.C., to meet with members of Congress about federal funding for important transportation projects in our region. Along with several Board members, it will be my second visit in recent weeks to discuss ISTEA II (the reauthorization of the five year Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) funding.

During my first visit, I testified before a House appropriation subcommittee about the need for federal funding for Red Line Segment 3 for FY 1997-98. The chairman of the subcommittee expressed support for funding to relieve traffic congestion in Los Angeles.

I also discussed with members of our Congressional delegation our request for ISTEA II funding. Eight members of the Los Angeles congressional delegation signed a letter of support for our ISTEA II Request.

Our ISTEA II request, totaling \$723 million, includes \$250 million for bus system improvements. This will allow the MTA and 16 municipal operators to replace 130 old buses a year for a total of 650 buses over the next five years. The municipal operators also have bus purchase requests before Congress and they and the MTA have agreed on a joint lobbying strategy. These would be in addition to the buses funded in our Long-Range Transportation Plan. We requested a total of \$271 million for highway improvements, including the El Monte Busway Extension, the I-10 HOV lane, San Gabriel Valley railroad grade separations, and Santa Monica Boulevard.

We asked for \$202 million for Metro Rail extensions in Mid-City, the San Fernando Valley and Eastside. The MTA

also has asked for a Fiscal Year 1997-98 appropriation of \$100 million for the Metro Rail Segment 3 project in North Hollywood and Eastside. Our request is consistent with the Board adopted Rail Recovery Plan. The Federal Administration has recommended \$99 million for these projects.

I believe the project list we submitted to Congress for both ISTEA II and next year's federal appropriation addresses our regional transportation needs and I'm optimistic we'll be successful. I want to thank members of the staff who helped put together our plan and prepared our funding requests.

Kimball Heads Procurement

Congratulations to Art Kimball, who was named last week as the Executive Officer of the new Office of Procurement and Distribution. The unit combines the procurement staffs from the Materiel Department and the Construction Department. Art will report to Terry Matsumoto, Interim Deputy CEO.

The Office of Procurement and Distribution's 240-plus employees are responsible for procurement of all goods, equipment, professional, general, and construction services. They also are responsible for the planning, ordering and management of a \$50 million inventory in support of the agency's requirements.

Prior to joining the MTA in 1995, Art was chief of all procurement functions at BART for two years. Earlier, he served five years as deputy vice-president and chief procurement officer for New York City Transit. He also was managing director of procurement for Pan Am with 28 years of service. A Marine Corps veteran, Art earned a BA from City University of New York, Queens College.

Performance Appraisal Update

The new performance appraisal system that was to have gone into effect March 1 has been postponed until July 1. Implementation of the program was delayed after comments received from supervisors indicated there wasn't sufficient time to develop employee performance objectives.

When implemented, the new performance appraisal system will require supervisors and employees to develop personal performance objectives which then will be reviewed at regular intervals during the year. Communication is the key to the process.

Individual performance will be evaluated on seven factors: communication, customer service, diversity, leadership, planning and implementation, teamwork, and problem-solving. A five-category scale will be used to grade performance: exceptional, commendable, effective performance, needs improvement, and unacceptable.

One of the important goals of the performance appraisal system is to link it to merit pay. I'll bring you more infor-

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mation about performance appraisal and merit pay in future issues of the CEO Report.

Using the Internet

Now that many of us have access to the Internet through our MTA computers, it's a good time to be reminded of the rules for using the Web. Let's first remember that your access to the Internet is a privilege. It is to be used for business-related purposes only.

To guard against abuse of Internet access, the MTA employs both internal and external security services to monitor employee use. Warnings are issued to employees who access inappropriate websites or who misuse the system in other ways. Continued abuse can lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal. Criminal abuses will be investigated by the Transit Police.

The Internet is a valuable resource. It can provide information we need in our daily work. Through the Internet, vendors, contractors and consultants, elected officials and the general public have access to important information about the MTA. Use of the Internet for business is going to become more important.

Passenger Advisory Committee

The Northern Region of Transit Operations has launched a new program that will give our riders an opportunity to participate in improving Metro Bus service. Flyers have been issued inviting patrons to join an MTA Passenger Advisory Committee (PAC).

Northern Region General Manager Jon Hillmer expects to form PACs of 10 to 20 riders each in the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys and in Northeast Los Angeles. According to Mark Dierking, Public Affairs Manager, members should be a cross-section of our passengers for these regions representing all types of bus patrons. The PACs will meet monthly at a division or another convenient location.

PAC members will give the MTA staff feedback on service, review new programs before they begin, and provide a sounding board for ideas. In return, members will have a forum for their issues and will have an opportunity to represent fellow patrons. Each also will receive a free bus pass.

Let's wish the Northern Region success with its Passenger Advisory Committee idea. It has great promise as a customer first program.

MTA Career Day

Our third annual Career Day is set for Tuesday, March 18, from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Headquarters. It promises to be an exciting day as some 380 juniors and seniors from four area high schools join us to learn more about careers in transportation. I want to thank those of you who have volunteered to mentor these youngsters.

Career Day is the annual highlight of the MTA's highly successful Transportation Careers Academy Program (TCAP) and Transportation Occupations Programs (TOP). This year's event will include displays by several MTA departments, Metrolink and Long Beach Transit.

We can be proud that the MTA leads the industry in developing a volunteer program with over 200 volunteers who help prepare our future workforce. Much credit goes to our Career Development and Training Center, which operates TCAP, TOP, Transportation Careers Academy and other programs that require the expertise of our Transportation Teaching Institute (TTI) volunteers. A special thanks, also, to

TTI Program Manager Art Gomez for his work organizing this year's Career Day.

CEO HotLine

I object to a notice I saw recently on an MTA bulletin board. It advertised a talk by a speaker whose topic was "how to be black on the weekends." I think this is inflammatory and not constructive for our working environment.

The speaker, Tom Williams, was sponsored by the African-American Employee Association (AAEA) as part of our observance of Black History Month. The title of his book, *How to be Black on the Weekends*, is provocative, but the subject concerns how our behavior and language in a casual setting may not be appropriate for the workplace. He also discussed how prejudice is most often based on a misperception of other people. I'm sorry you missed the author's talk. You would have had an opportunity to ask questions and express your concerns. According to Naomi Nightingale, president of our AAEA chapter, all employees are welcome to attend the group's meetings.

We need to let our passengers know that when they purchase monthly passes and tokens, they can use them on both our buses and our trains. Many of the passengers who ride my bus don't seem to know that.

Good observation. We're taking many steps to strengthen the identity of the Metro System. We display the slogan "Travel Smart...Take Metro" on all our buses and trains, and we've just adopted a consistent new color scheme that will be applied to all of our bus and rail vehicles over the next few years. In addition, all materials used to promote fares, passes and tokens stress that they apply to both Metro Buses and Trains. We'll look into further emphasizing this fact in our on-board ads. Educating the public is a long-term process. I hope everyone will help by using the term "Metro" when talking to the public about our transit system.

Closing Thoughts

One of most touching moments of recent Board meetings occurred February 26 when the Board voted to name the prototype models of the Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB) in honor of the late general chairman of the UTU, Earl Clark. Mrs. Audrey Clark was present, along with General Chairman James Williams and other union executives, to accept a plaque honoring her husband.

During his 25 years as the leader of his union, Earl Clark was fully committed to seeking ways to improve public transportation. Naming the ATTB in his honor is a fitting tribute, I believe, because this new, light-weight, fuel-efficient, low-emissions bus holds such promise for the future of mass transportation in the United States.



Linda Bohlinger

A publication of MTA CEO's Office

Editor:	Bill Heard
Designer:	Elvia Hernandez
Executive Officer, Communications:	Rae James
Director, Public Relations:	Marc Littman
Asst. Director, Internal Communications:	Phyllis Tucker
Manager, Printing Services:	Al Moore



CM17391397