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MTA REVIEW

August 1996



Metro Red Line Wilshire Extension Opens!

The Wilshire extension of the Metro Red Line opened with a community-wide celebration on July 13 and 14. An estimated 90,000 people traveled free between the Gateway Transit Center/Union Station and the new stations on Wilshire Boulevard at Vermont, Normandie and Western

avenues, enjoying music and entertainment at each of the stations. The Metro Red Line expands by nearly 50% with the Wilshire extension opening and offers greatly reduced times to get downtown.

"We know that thousands of people will find the extension of the Red Line

will help them get to work and other destinations quickly and easily," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA CEO. "The numbers exceeded our expectations as so many came out and rode the line over that weekend. The line will help bring people together in our community and reduce congestion and air pollution."

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The Metro Red Line expands by nearly 50% with the Wilshire/Western extension opening and offers greatly reduced times to get downtown.

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Ken Steele, Alt.*

Joseph E. Drew

Chief Executive Officer

"Metro Red Line Wilshire"

(continued from page 1)

Sixteen Metro bus lines now link with the three new rail stations on Wilshire. The Metro Red Line also provides connections at Union Station for local and regional buses, Metrolink commuter rail lines and Amtrak long distance rail service.

"The opening of the extension caps five years of construction and brings to 44 the number of passenger rail stations operated by the MTA," said Drew.

He added, "Metro Red Line ridership is expected to increase from the present 22,000 daily boarding passengers to 40,000 within one year. It won't take long for commuters to realize just how quickly they can move from bus to rail and back again, and how much faster they will be able to reach their destination because of the Red Line Wilshire extension."

In all, 500,000 cubic yards of earth were removed to make way for the tunnels and stations of the Wilshire Red Line extension. An estimated 400,000 tons of concrete form the tunnel walls and stations. The subway tunnels average 60 feet below the surface traffic on Wilshire Boulevard.

The safety of the Metro Red Line design and construction was demonstrated during the 1994 Northridge earthquake when inspection of the 4.4 miles then in service showed no damage and allowed the trains to go back in service in a short time to assist the community. The Metro Red Line is designed to move with the earth in the event of a quake and to continue operating during small and moderate tremors.

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MTA CEO Joseph Drew introduces visitors to the benefits of the Metro Red Line during the opening festivities.





Metro View

*By Joseph E. Drew
 MTA Chief Executive Officer*

A few weeks ago, the MTA celebrated the opening of the Wilshire extension on the Metro Red Line. It was a community-wide celebration designed to introduce all segments of the population to the wonders of the Metro Rail system. It was a resounding success. On the opening weekend alone, 90,000 people enjoyed a free ride, a wide variety of entertainment, displays and commemorative give-aways.

All of us at the MTA know this opening is really a step forward in our long-range transportation plan. We have committed to the people of Los Angeles County that we will develop a multimodal transportation plan to decrease traffic congestion and improve air quality. And we will ensure that alternative modes of travel are safe, reliable, efficient, and affordable. Yes, we are fulfilling our MTA mission, but on another level, we are also expanding the worlds of those we serve.

As I traveled from station to station during the opening, I had the opportunity to talk to a number of

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Short Range Transit Plan

Approved the fiscal years 1997-2000 Countywide Short Range Transit Plan. The MTA programs state and federal revenues using the information contained in the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) prepared by each regionally funded operator as a guide. The MTA allocates the majority of operating and capital funds by formulas developed with the cooperation and concurrence of the operators who submitted SRTPs. The SRTP documents the region's plans to resolve anticipated problems while expanding transit services and mobility opportunities for the people of Los Angeles.

Metro Call Box System

Acting as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), awarded a contract in the amount of \$4,067,720 to bring the Metro Call Box system into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The refinements to the system will include a keyboard and a text display to assist the hearing and speech impaired community. There are sufficient SAFE funds available to accommodate the financial requirements of this contract. SAFE is financed by a dedicated \$1 per year surcharge on each motor vehicle registered in Los Angeles County.

Metro Red Line

The Board authorized a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency for development planning and a developer selection process for MTA property at the Hollywood/Highland Metro Red Line Station. Upon

completion of construction late in 1998, the station plaza and its underground facilities will occupy approximately 25,000 square feet fronting on Hollywood Boulevard. The remaining 35,000 square feet will then be available for joint development, which could be combined with adjoining properties to allow expansion of the plaza, incorporate multi-modal transfer and pedestrian connections, and become the focal point of a retail and entertainment oriented development. The station will link the historic Hollywood cinema and tourist district and surrounding neighborhoods to the entire Metro system.

The board also awarded a subcontract to CHCG Architects for architectural/engineering services on the 1st/Boyle Station for the east side extension.

Natural Gas Buses

The Board approved the purchase of 250 state-of-the-art compressed natural gas (CNG) buses as part of MTA's commitment to providing the highest level of passenger service. In an attempt to provide enhanced security for bus passengers and drivers, each bus will be equipped with a digital security camera system to monitor activity on the bus.

The addition of these new alternative fueled buses will improve the quality of service to riders and aid in the agency's mandate to meet clean air standards for the region.

The buses, costing \$327,545 each, will have other state-of-the-art features such as new composite flooring and solid state microprocessor controls.

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"Board Report,"
(continued from page 3)

These new elements are also designed to improve passenger safety.

The new buses will include a brighter interior that features light gray upholstery and stainless steel seating similar to that on Metro Blue Line trains, plus a special protective interior coating that makes graffiti and vandalism removal easier.

"This equipment will greatly improve our bus system as we replace the 15-year-old diesel buses that are no longer cost-effective to operate or maintain," said MTA Chief Executive Officer Joseph E. Drew.

The 250 CNG buses will be manufactured by Neoplan USA Corporation under contract with the MTA at a total cost of \$90 million. Delivery of the new buses is expected in late 1998.

Pasadena Blue Line

Approved the final design of the Pasadena Blue Line Projects and froze the project scope from further

"Metro View,"
(continued from page 3)

people. I spoke with a local Korean business-woman who was thrilled to be able to shave a significant amount of time off her daily commute into downtown Los Angeles. I had the pleasure of meeting a young sight-impaired man who ventured out by himself for his first ride on the subway system. I rode the train with a Hispanic family who were on their way to a shopping excursion at Grand Central Market. And I spoke with some senior citizens who came to enjoy a free ride on the Red Line with plans to stop at the Los Angeles Central Library.

Our rail system is fulfilling much more than a goal in our Long Range Plan, it's keeping a promise to bring the community together. With future extensions of the Red Line we'll be able to connect Little Tokyo with the barrios of East Los Angeles with the

entertainment centers of Hollywood. We are not only providing a means of getting someplace, but someplace exciting.

All of these people were very pleased with their experiences. They spoke about feeling safe, the quickness of the ride, the cleanliness of the stations, the beauty of the artwork, and the overall convenience of the system.

Yes, we are providing residents and visitors with more choices on how to get from point A to point B, whether their destinations are work, shopping or recreation. Yes, we're doing our part to clean the air. And, yes, we are making great strides in reducing traffic congestion. But, perhaps, most importantly, we're opening up people's worlds and we're bringing people closer together. This may be our greatest achievement. ■

changes. This will allow the project to be staffed and completed by 2001 within the \$803.9 million budget. ■

*The Pasadena
Blue Line
Southwest Museum
station is slated
for completion
in 2001.*



<http://www.mta.net>



MTA Goes "On-Line"

Inaugurating a new era of electronic service to the residential and business community, MTA's world wide web (Internet) site opened for a "beta testing period" for public use on July 22nd. The address is: <http://www.mta.net>

People accessing the new MTA web page are currently able to access MTA Board and committee agendas, open solicitations, contract awards, information on the lobbyist registration programs, and bid documents. In the future, the MTA will be bringing "on line" customer information, marketing and public information materials, public meeting announcements/agendas, news releases, employment bulletins and public newsletters.

According to Harry Goldsborough, MTA marketing and advertising manager, "We're designing the system to enhance and augment public access to the many information vehicles produced by the MTA." Other MTA departments will also be using the Internet service, so that users will also have information on MTA employment, schedules, public hearings, and even bus and train schedules.

The project will also offer MTA employees access to Internet e-mail for both outgoing and incoming business related communications, thus

empowering each employee to receive and respond immediately to inquiries, notices or questions from the global community.

Additionally, the program provides access to the hundreds of thousands of WWW (World Wide Web) sites which offer a vast array of information on products and services. According to Goldsborough, "Access to this service offers MTA an immediate form of information gathering at no additional cost."

A number of departments are working to bring information on line. Recently, vendor relations upgraded their system. The new vendor services system represents a substantial enhancement to the dial-in bulletin board the vendor relations department has offered in the past. The MTA's goal is to have all professional services and bid document packages published electronically, and to discontinue mailing out bid packages by the end of the third quarter. Companies without access to the Internet will still be able to visit the Materiel Department in the Gateway Transit Center building and use a public terminal to download a copy of the bid documents.

The web site is managed in-house by the MTA Information Technologies Services (ITS) and Marketing

Departments, and represents current technology. According to Paul Wilkinson, a systems project leader for ITS, "We've been working on this project for three years, but with the assistance of Maggie Chen, Ken Frederick and Kimberly Klever from ITS and Thomas Amiya from Marketing, we've been able to make exponential advancement in implementation of this program." It will be a strong improvement over the current dial in BBS which is maintained out-of-house and was designed using an older generation of technology.

According to Goldsborough, "A key element of the program involves highlighting the locations throughout Los Angeles County that provide free public access to the Internet. Even though the information placed on the Internet is available in other formats, we still want to provide maximum public access to this new service."

Currently a large number of transit agencies worldwide are "on the net" including London, New York, Atlanta, and Chicago. "It is our project goal," states Goldsborough, "to develop an efficient and effective electronic information distribution process via the web to serve the needs of the agency and the public in a timely and accurate manner." ■

Other Board Actions

Spending Plan Focuses on Customer Services

Board Approves \$2.8 Billion FY 97 Budget

The Board of Directors approved a \$2.8 billion spending plan for FY 97 that places customer service and better bus service as the authority's top priorities and includes funds to implement a Bus System Improvement Plan. The budget also maintains present service levels and retains the current Metro fare structure.

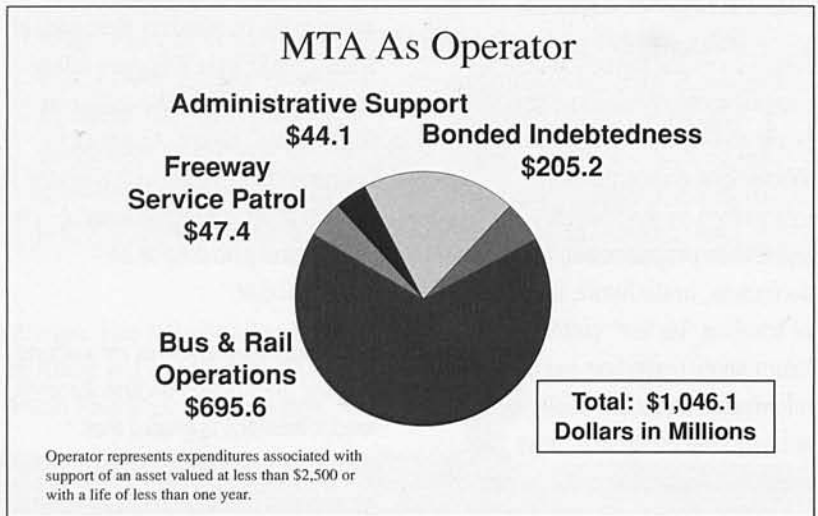
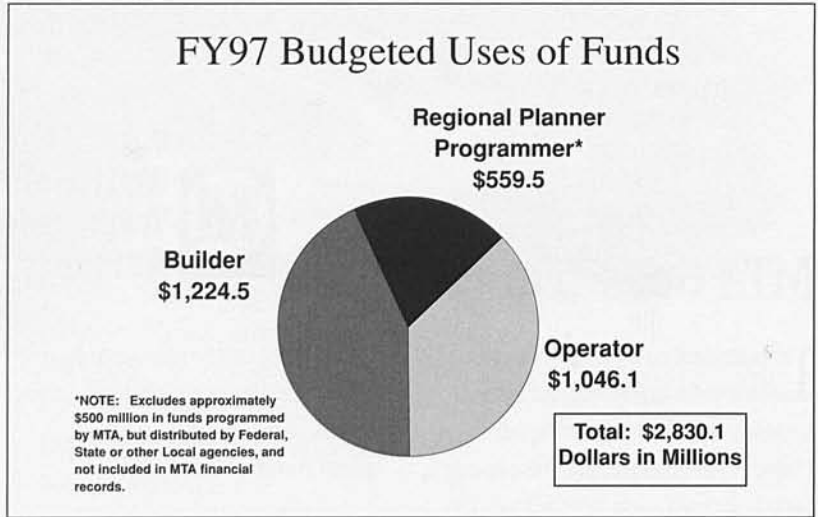
"With this budget, our Board is sending a strong message to our passengers that we are determined to make good our commitment to provide quality, safe and reliable bus and rail services for the region without increasing the cost to our patrons," said MTA Chief Executive Officer Joseph E. Drew.

The FY 97 budget consists of three primary areas of spending for the Authority including: \$1.046 billion for operation of transportation services; \$1.23 billion for transportation construction; and \$560 million for transportation planning. Additionally, all revenues received above budgeted projections will be dedicated to the Bus Service Improvement plan.

"This budget sets in place a cornerstone for the evolution of the MTA," said CEO Drew. "We have resolved nearly all merger transition issues and are focused on meeting our customers' needs through improved service and more effective utilization of our organization."

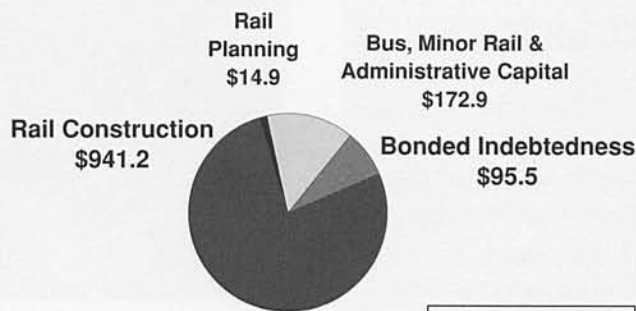
Highlights of the Board adopted FY 97 budget include:

- Maintenance of present fare structure - no fare increases.
- Maintenance of current bus service levels (\$595 million).



- Implementation of the Bus System Improvement Plan (\$10.4 million).
- Initiation of revenue operation of Wilshire segment of Metro Red Line.
- Full operational funding for the Metro Blue Line (\$40 million), Metro Green Line (\$28.6 million) and the Metro Red Line (\$32.2 million).
- Addition of 250 new compressed natural gas buses (\$62.4 million).
- Continuation of funding for the Advanced Technology Bus program (\$11.6 million).
- Installation of emergency communications equipment to improve bus and rail passenger safety.
- Freeway Service Patrol and Motorist Assistance Program (\$47.4 million).
- Continuation of aggressive anti-graffiti bus interior cleaning program.

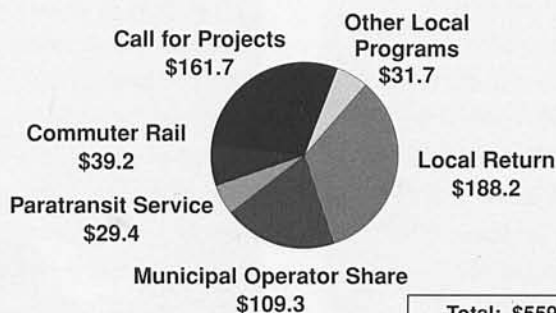
MTA As Builder



support of an asset valued at less than \$2,500 or more with a life of less than one year.

**Total: \$1,224.5
 Dollars in Millions**

MTA As Regional Planner & Programmer*



*NOTE: Excludes approximately \$500 million in funds programmed by MTA, but distributed by Federal, State or other Local agencies, and not included in MTA financial records.

**Total: \$559.5
 Dollars in Millions**

- Continuation of rail construction activities on Metro Red Line Segment Two (Hollywood), Segment Three (North Hollywood) and Pasadena Blue Line, meeting all quality, safety and performance targets.
- Operational and capital funding for Metrolink service operated within Los Angeles County (\$39.2 million).
- Funding for paratransit services for the disabled (\$29.4 million).

The FY 97 budget also includes funds programmed to other municipal bus operators as well as their capital expenses totaling \$118 million.

Funds for bus operations to municipal operators include: Arcadia (\$501,000), Claremont (\$143,000), Commerce (\$265,000), Culver City (\$3.8 million), Foothill Transit (\$17.2 million), Gardena (\$3.9 million), La Mirada (\$236,000), Long Beach (\$19.4 million), Montebello (\$5.4 million), Norwalk (\$1.4 million), Redondo Beach (\$78,000), Santa Monica (\$17.5 million) Torrance (\$5 million), Antelope Valley (\$765,000) LADOT (\$2.7 million) and Santa Clarita (\$861,000).

"We combined realistic revenue and expense projects with new cost-cutting management strategies to achieve a balanced MTA spending plan for FY 97 which provides improved bus and rail services to our patrons," CEO Drew said.

MTA and Metrolink Make Major Enhancement in Right-of-Way Safety

The MTA and Metrolink have begun installing fences and warning signs along the Metrolink Santa Clarita Line right-of-way. The program is part of a safety enhancement effort that will extend 32 miles from Glendale to the Santa Clarita-Princessa station.

"Rail safety has always been a high priority for the MTA," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA CEO. "These safety enhancements are designed to deter trespassing and illegal dumping and make the areas along the right-of-way safer for bus patrons and pedestrians.

"We're employing a cost-effective approach by building limited fencing at strategic locations which will enhance safety over a much larger area. The target locations include the areas near overpasses and underpasses, streets that dead-end at railroad tracks, and bus stops located along the right-of-way. We installed a two-mile pilot project in the Pacoima area in 1993 which reduced pedestrian trespassing by 95%."

The MTA is using vandal-resistant galvanized mesh fencing which costs less than wrought iron and is more durable than chain link. Signs warn pedestrians to keep out of the rail right-of-way.

Construction on the \$756,000 program began in early May and was completed in June. ■

Rail Construction

House Transportation Subcommittee Increases Rail Funding to \$90 Million for the Metro Red Line

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation has recommended funding the Metro Red Line at \$90 million for Fiscal Year 1997. This is an increase of \$5 million over last year's allocation. The funds will be used for the North Hollywood, East Los Angeles and Mid-City extensions of the Red Line.

"We are pleased, during this time of tight fiscal policy, to have bi-partisan Congressional support for continuation of the Metro Red Line construction in Los Angeles," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA Chief Executive Officer. "We appreciate the leadership of Chairman Frank Wolf and the members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, as well as the Southern California congressional delegation."

The Subcommittee also recommended \$6.5 million for the Advanced Technology Transit Bus project and approximately \$21 million for operating assistance for Los Angeles County, maintaining it at last year's level.

"This action, which is the first step in the federal budget process, shows the confidence of the members of Congress in the new organizational focus being implemented at the MTA," said Drew. "We will continue working with the Congressional delegation and Chairman Wolf to ensure that the FY'97 transportation spending bill meets Los Angeles County's transportation needs."

The bill is now being considered by the U.S. Senate. ■

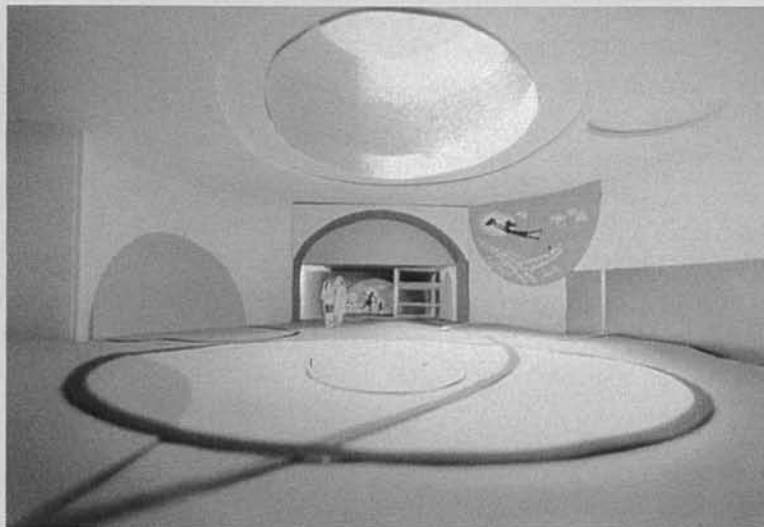
New Faces at the MTA



TERRY MATSUMOTO ▲
EXECUTIVE OFFICER -
ADMINISTRATION

Terry Matsumoto has been appointed Executive Officer - Administration. Matsumoto brings over 25 years of professional and managerial experience in both the private and public sector to this position. He was formerly the Director of Strategic Funding Analysis for the MTA's Regional Transportation Planning and Development division and was formerly the Controller of the MTA. Prior to joining the MTA, he was with the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles as a key member of the Management Team. His prior experience includes managing financial functions for Republic Geothermal, Inc., divisional finance and administration for Tetra Tech, Inc. in Arlington, Virginia, and auditing with Coopers & Lybrand. Matsumoto is a certified public accountant and earned BA and MBA degrees from UCLA.

Funding from the Federal government will speed the opening of the Metro Red Line North Hollywood Station.





◀ **BARBARA LONG**
 DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF
 MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

Barbara Long is the new director of the Office of Management and Budget. She comes to the MTA from Broadway stores where she was responsible for planning and forecasting for the 82-store chain. Long holds a BA in economics from Stanford University and an MBA from UCLA.

1995 he took over as acting Manager of Operations Planning. Spivack has two master's degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, in planning and transportation engineering. He also holds double bachelor's degrees from Philadelphia's Temple University in economics and political science.

ANNE FISCHER (*below*)
RICHARD CARRON (*photo on page 10*)
 DIRECTOR OF CONTRACT
 ADMINISTRATION ▼



◀ **WILLIAM HENDERSON**
 CONTROLLER

William Henderson is the MTA's new Controller. Formerly financial accounting manager for the City of Anaheim, Henderson also has consulted with many agencies in California on cost allocation and revenue enhancement. He holds a BS from Brigham Young University and is a certified public accountant. Henderson has 70 employees who report to him.



In an attempt to provide better customer service, the Contract Administration Department will have two directors. Anne Fischer will oversee all professional and consultant services contracts and contract training for employees, and Richard Carron will have responsibility for the operations contracts and for all direct purchases.



◀ **GARY SPIVACK**
 DIRECTOR OF GENERAL SERVICES

Gary Spivack, a long-time employee of the agency, has been appointed as Director of General Services. Spivack will oversee Building Services, Mail and Records Management, Graphics and the Print Shop. Spivack's career with public transportation in Los Angeles goes back to 1982 when he was appointed Director of Planning for the RTD. In 1990 he was promoted to Assistant General Manager of Planning and Public Affairs. In 1993 he served a brief period of time as the Special Assistant to the former CEO, and in

Anne Fischer was employed by the LACTC in 1991 where she served as Deputy Director and Director of Contract Administration. She previously was employed by Hughes Aircraft as Manager of Contracts, Department of the Army, and she handled management contract services for American Management Services.

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"New Faces"
(continued from page 9)

RICHARD
CARRON



She has a BA in English from the University of Detroit, Mercy and an MA in English from Eastern Michigan University, where she also taught for a time. She has written a book for the agency called "The User-Friendly Guide to Procurement."

Richard Carron started his career in transportation with the RTD in 1983 as a contract administrator. In 1992 he was appointed acting assistant director. He began his new position as Director of Contract Administration in May. Carron has responsibility for the operations area and all direct purchases for the agency. He holds a BS in Biology from Idaho State University and an MS in procurement management with a specialization in contract law from Northrop University Law School in Los Angeles. Prior to his employment with the MTA, Carron was the senior contract and grants officer for USC. He also worked as a contractor for the U.S. Department of State in Africa and France. ●

MTA Library is a Multi-Media Resource for Transportation Information

by Bill Heard

Geek-Whiz facts you should know: The largest transit agency library in the nation is on the 15th floor of the MTA's Gateway headquarters building. It houses more than 20,000 volumes and has room for 30,000. It has CD-ROM and Internet capabilities. It stores bus passes dating to the 1890's. It serves not only employees, but patrons as distant as Iran. It has two magnifying glasses.

"There's an old library adage," says Dorothy Gray, library services manager for the past eight years, "that you can't open a library without an encyclopedia, a dictionary and a magnifying glass. I bought two."

That kind of planning by the Columbia University-trained librarian has helped the MTA's library grow from its status in 1971 as merely a repository for old reports and documents to today's modern multi-media center capable of providing information about an increasingly wide range of transportation-related topics. In addition to Gray, the staff includes Librarian Glenda Mariner and a student intern.

Remember the card catalog you once used to find books at the library? At the MTA library, you'll access a computer catalog system to find the book or periodical you want. And if the MTA library doesn't have the publication,

Gray can get it for you through an interlibrary network.

Plug a CD into one of the library's computers and you can search the United States legal codes, check a historical fact or locate an article in a recent periodical. Bus scheduling planners frequently use a CD that shows map locations of street addresses. You can plan a detailed, cross-country trip from Los Angeles to New York City with a library CD, or get information about heart diseases or prescription medicines. And, of course, there's the Internet with access to home pages sponsored by many transit properties, including an MTA home page beginning later this year.

Resources like these have doubled the growth of library patronage and tripled the number of phone calls, Gray notes. During the first three months of 1995, some 2,300 patrons used the library. In the same period this year, more than 4,600 patrons dropped in for assistance.

Aside from the information resources, a number of employees and members of the public come to view some of Gray's favorites, the transportation memorabilia.

The library has an entire cabinet filled with real estate records dating from the 1920s to the 1970s. There's a leather-bound 1915 study of a proposal



*MTA Library
Manager Dorothy
Gray (right) and
Intern Margarita
Nelgoza check
references with
the library's
computer system.*

to build a subway in Los Angeles. Jars of transit tokens. Hundreds of historical photographs of the city's trolley and bus systems. Deeds from properties once owned by MTA predecessor agencies. Pins, badges, shoulder patches, buttons, and even an 18-inch model of a yellow and green 1947 Los Angeles Transit Company bus.

"I would invite anyone who has historical items relating to Los Angeles transit to donate them to the library," Gray says. Items she's interested in include trolley or bus seats, station signs, uniform items, old fareboxes and registers, route indicators, roller signs, maps and historic promotional items.

*"Our presence here
is one of service . . .
There's almost always
something we can
do for you."*

Almost every month sees a special display, usually one celebrating the culture or heritage of MTA employees. In past months, the library marked Philippine National Independence Day and United States Independence Day. August and September are transportation information months with displays on such topics as the music or humor of transportation.

The displays are fun, the librarian says, but their purpose is to make people aware of the information resource at their fingertips and to highlight the variety of services the library offers.

"Our presence here is one of service," says Gray. "Whenever you walk into our library, there's almost always something we can do for you."

The public may use the library on Mondays from 8 a.m. until noon and on Thursdays from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., or during other hours and days by appointment. The library's phone number is (213) 922-4858 or (213) 922-4859. ●

"Metro Red Line Wilshire"
(continued from page 2)

The Wilshire rail project includes \$3.4 million for improvements to sidewalks, tree plantings and amenities such as bus benches and information kiosks. Known as Streetscape, the intent of the effort is to revitalize the area and make it more attractive and accessible to pedestrians.

The opening of the Wilshire/Western extension marks the second phase of a subway construction project which will eventually involve 22 miles of subway connecting downtown Los Angeles, North Hollywood, East Los Angeles and the Pico-Union district.

Currently under construction and slated for completion in December of 1998 is the 4.8-mile Vermont/Hollywood

segment from Wilshire/Vermont to Hollywood/Vine in Hollywood. Work also is underway to extend the subway from Hollywood/Vine under the Hollywood Hills to North Hollywood. This leg of the Red Line is expected to open in 2001.

Future expansion of the Red Line is planned from Wilshire/Western southwest to Pico/San Vicente, from Union Station to Whittier/Atlantic in East Los Angeles, and other extensions across the San Fernando Valley, to West Los Angeles, and east from Whittier/Atlantic.

Construction of the Red Line is being financed through a combination of federal and state funding, and

matching funds from sales tax initiatives approved by voters of Los Angeles County.

Trains operate between 4:45 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. daily. Travel time from Wilshire/Western, the new temporary western terminus of the line, to Union Station is 13 minutes, a trip that can easily take more than twice as long by surface streets. The cash fare on the Red Line is now \$1.35, consistent with the other Metro Rail lines and Metro Buses. Ninety-cent discount tokens, sold in bags of 10, are available, reducing the cost of the fare by 45 cents. Discounted monthly passes, good for both bus and train service, also are sold at more than 700 outlets. ■

Travis the Safety Owl was a popular attendee at the grand opening festivities.



Helping the MTA Work Better

The New Department of Organizational Effectiveness

Making the MTA work better is one of the primary goals of the new Department of Organizational Effectiveness that was created by MTA Chief Executive Officer Joseph E. Drew. "It is a department designed to help the MTA work better for everyone - taxpayers, customers and employees. The ultimate outcome will be a more accountable, more effective MTA with satisfied customers and a motivated staff who feel that their contributions are valued," he said.

According to Drew, "The MTA is filled with capable and talented people. As with any large organization, particularly one which has gone through a merger such as the MTA, employees need effective leadership. They also need to be empowered and involved. This Department will facilitate problem-solving and improvement involving executive management, the Board and Staff. It is really a way for us to pull the agency together as a team."

Led by Patricia V. McLaughlin, the staff of the new department acts as internal consultants who are serving as "change agents for the MTA." McLaughlin is a seasoned transportation professional who has specialized in implementing new initiatives and programs. She began her transportation career with the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD) in 1975 where she was involved in innovative programs such as implementing accessible buses and energy contingency planning. Shortly

after joining the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) in 1981, she designed the startup program to fund local transportation under Proposition A. She later led a staff "design team" to redesign LACTC, including creation of an "Area Team" structure for planning. With other RTD and LACTC staff, she served on the Merger Steering Committee Staff Committee. After the MTA was created in 1993, she was promoted to Deputy Executive Officer, Multimodal Planning.

She states, "Currently, we are actively seeking input from the public and our own employees on what's being done well at the MTA and what can be improved."

A major project for the group during the next two months will be a top-to-bottom organizational review initiated by the Board. Involving both Board and staff, this review will take a look at MTA's goals and objectives, analyze parts of the organization that have not been reviewed by previous studies and make recommendations for improvement. The Organizational Effectiveness group is also facilitating a team of in-house experts from customer relations, planning and human resources in developing



Patricia McLaughlin is leading the new Department of Organizational Effectiveness.

customer satisfaction measures to help MTA see how it is meeting customer needs throughout the region.

Recognizing the importance of MTA's employees and their input, the team will be working with human resources to develop and to solicit employee input. In a related vein, a recent assignment of an employee advisory group established by the CEO has been to talk to fellow employees and develop a list of "weird rules" that needed to be eliminated or altered. McLaughlin's team will be working with executive staff to streamline work and correct problems that employees identify.

"We are really trying to make the MTA more effective for everyone, including the people who use our services, taxpayers, policymakers and employees," said McLaughlin. She added, "We are making customer satisfaction the single most driving force at the MTA. Organizational Effectiveness will be working with

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And the Winner is . . .

“Tales from the Fast Lane” Contest

When the MTA first requested commuters funniest, most romantic, most outrageous carpool or vanpool story to help promote ridesharing’s importance, the agency never expected such an overwhelming response. Tales ranged from the heartwarming to the incredible, and in a few instances, the unprintable. The MTA, in partnership with Caltrans and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) sponsored the contest which awarded prizes to individuals based on true-life tales that occurred which either carpooling or vanpooling to and from work. The winners were selected by a panel from the three organizations.

It was difficult to narrow down the field of 400 entrants, but in the end, Kimberly Arguelles from Covina took top honors with the following tale:

“I’ve often wondered what happened to my younger sister. When we were very young our parents were killed by a drunk driver, and we were adopted by separate families and relocated.

“A co-worker asked me if I would like to join a carpool. I accepted and started carpooling the next day. Meeting the other riders, I noticed one lady looked familiar. As we carpoled to work, we both started sharing our childhood stories, and I was shocked to discover she was my long-lost sister!”

Arguelles was rewarded with the grand prize, a trip for two from Continental Airlines to anywhere in the U.S., Mexico or the Caribbean that Continental serves, a \$1,000 spending spree courtesy of Bank of America and Pacific Bell, plus a six-month membership to Family Fitness Centers.

The second place winner, John Streltsoff of Thousand Oaks, tells how he was able to finance two kids through college with cars thanks to vanpools. “Since 1972, I have walked to a vanpool pickup spot. I don’t need a car. Figure very conservatively at 30 cents per mile X 20,000 miles X 24 years = \$144,000 - \$37,440 in fares = a savings of \$106,560.” Streltsoff was rewarded with a cruise for two to Baja, Mexico aboard Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines from Polo Tours.

A tie for third place involved a story about a vanpool rushing to the aid of a downed aircraft (that was vividly corroborated by the staff at Torrance Airport) and how one carpooler found his true love.

According to Bobbie Douglass from Torrance, “Our commuter van was enroute home from Torrance when we saw the aircraft plummet to the ground. At the last moment of their training flight, the pilot managed to pull up and belly land the plane. Since all 13 of us had just completed our American Red Cross First Aid and CPR class that day, we rushed to their aid. We triaged the victims and had everything under control when the first responders arrived.”

Robert Neu from Los Angeles spins this tale: “My friend Stan talked me into carpooling. He lived nearby, we worked the same hours, and it would save us both money. Word got around at work and within a couple weeks we had two more carpoolers: Phil, another sport nut and David Letterman fan, and Paula, a quiet new summer hire.

“Within a month I actually looked forward to the ride to work. They’d be

there every morning like clockwork: As I climbed in the backseat Phil would toss me a bagel and Stan would yell, 'Hurry Up! We're gonna be late!'

"Well, about three months later I woke up feeling strange. I headed to work with them anyway. They quickly realized something was seriously wrong — I hadn't touched my bagel. We went to the emergency room. Though Stan and Phil went back to work, Paula stayed. And she was still there when I woke up several hours later with no appendix.

"To make a long story short, six months later Paula and I were married. As we walked out of the church to a barrage of flying rice we heard the insistent honking of a car horn.

"There at the curb was our ride, tin cans tied to the bumper and 'Just Married' written in soap on the windows. Sitting inside were Stan and Phil, grinning from ear to ear.

Phil tossed us both a couple of bagels. Stan yelled: 'Hurry Up! We're gonna be late!'"

Both Douglass and Neu will receive a one-night stay for two aboard the Hotel Queen Mary plus \$500 each, courtesy of Bank of America and Pacific Bell.

The fourth place award goes to Bernard Hernandez from Huntington Beach who spins this tale: "I had reconstructive knee surgery in late 1992. I had to take time off from work for rehabilitation, but before I went out I had been told I would be laid off from my job before Christmas. I have three young children, so this news was

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Commuting Gets Even Easier

Harbor/I 105 Freeway Passenger Platform Opens

Life has just gotten a little easier for commuters, thanks to the Freeway Passenger Platform at the bottom level of the Metro Green Line Harbor/I-105 Station.

The opening of the Freeway Passenger Platform is significant because it provides transit riders with direct connections to the Metro Green Line and various local and express buses operating between the South Bay and downtown Los Angeles. The project was brought into fruition thanks to federal funding and a partnership between Caltrans and the MTA.

In early July, Caltrans opened portions of the newly constructed HOV lanes on the Harbor Freeway.

To help celebrate this event, the MTA has implemented a reduced fare of \$1.85 on express Lines 444, 445, 446, and 447 between the Green Line Harbor Station and the downtown area. These lines serve the passenger platform at the freeway level. Also serving the passenger platform is express Line 448, operated by the City of Los Angeles.

The services and fares for the freeway buses are coordinated to maximize customer convenience. A passenger boarding at the freeway level can ride any bus stopping there - Metro or LADOT for the same fare.

The opening of the Freeway Passenger Platform enhances the current bus interface at this station. Currently, Metro local Lines 45, 46, 81, 120, 207 and Limited Lines 345 and 357 serve

the station at the street level (Figueroa Street). Also serving the station at this level are Torrance Lines 1 and 2. In the near future, Gardena Line 1 may also serve the station from Figueroa.

Next year, the entire Harbor Transitway with additional bus stops are scheduled to open. This will further promote travel opportunities along the Harbor Freeway corridor. ■

Workshops on Livable Communities

The MTA, Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are co-sponsoring a workshop on the role of transportation in creating livable communities. This is part of a series of workshops to be held throughout the United States. For the Southern California region, the event will take place Wednesday, September 25, 1996 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Long Beach Convention Center. Speakers from national, state and local agencies will address topics such as "Routes to Healthier Downtowns," "Community Facilities and Transit," and "Citizen Planners Creating Livable Communities." For more information about workshops on transportation and livable communities, please contact Joe Carreras of SCAG at (213) 236-1856, Fax (213) 236-1964. ■

“Organizational Effectiveness”
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other departments to develop customer satisfaction benchmarks, implement communications and training programs, and identify and implement work process improvements to achieve best practices.”

McLaughlin will be helping departments to look at ways to restructure and make programs and policies more efficient. Other key areas involve initiating a business planning process linked to budget and performance, and consolidating and improving contracting and procurement processes.

As part of their research to improve customer satisfaction levels,

McLaughlin’s group will study other agencies as well as private companies such as Nordstrom, Saturn and Federal Express that have received accolades for their quality customer service. “By looking outside as well as inside our industry, we will learn a great deal that can be applied at the MTA,” said McLaughlin.

“The Department of Organizational Effectiveness is a catalyst for positive change in the organization,” said McLaughlin. “If there is a problem, we’ll help people get together to solve it. The bottom line is having the MTA work better for everyone.” ■

“Tales from the Fast Lane”
(continued from page 13)

very distressing. While I was out on disability, I was notified by my employer that a new project could be given to me if I could get mobile in a hurry. I was on crutches for eight weeks and couldn’t drive, but my long-running carpool came to the rescue. My carpooler picked me up every day for three months until I could drive myself. I really think carpooling saved my job and maybe my career in engineering.”

Hernandez will receive a fun-filled cruise for two of Newport Harbor from Champagne Cruises plus Robert Cameron’s “Above Los Angeles” courtesy of Barnes & Noble, Pasadena. ■



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