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CEO Roger Snoble welcomes transit official Art Leahy, who will take the reins as Metro's chief executive April 6. *Photos by Gary Leonard*

Board Selects Orange County Transportation Executive Art Leahy to Head Metro

By LAURA KLOTH
myMetro.net

(March 5, 2009) Arriving aboard a shiny new hybrid Metro bus that aptly displayed: "Welcome Aboard Mr. Leahy," Metro's newly hired CEO Art Leahy joined Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Metro board members at a news conference Thursday in front of the Metro Headquarters.

"It is great to be here with you," Leahy told the crowd of media and spectators under a cool sunny sky.

"Let me thank the chair, Mr. Villaraigosa and board members for asking me to undertake this task. It's a great one. I appreciate the confidence of the board," Leahy continued and then added: "I look forward to doing everything I can to earn their trust and to deliver great projects and services for the taxpayers and travelers of Los Angeles County."

Leahy, 60, who heads the Orange County Transportation Authority, smiled as he signed a nine-page contract to become Metro's new CEO on April 6 after Metro's current and popular CEO Roger Snoble steps down to retire.



At left, newly hired chief executive Art Leahy signs on the dotted line. At right, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa replaces OCTA pin with a Metro one.

And to further punctuate Leahy's new role, the mayor even provided Leahy with a new Metro lapel pin to replace the OCTA pin he arrived with.

"Under Art's stewardship, the MTA is set to enter another era of progress building on the steady efforts in recent years to restore credibility to this agency, and improve the lives of Los Angeles County's commuter," the mayor said, "Today, let me be the first to say, welcome home."

Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Vice Chair Don Knabe said Leahy's hiring was a great opportunity for Metro because of Leahy's history with Metro would allow him to "jump right in."

Metro Board member Ara Najarian said, "We've got a great CEO that's leaving the agency, and a great one that's coming in. We've got transportation projects, subways, light rails, freeway improvements. It's a great day for the county of Los Angeles and for all our residents."

Snoble said he was confident in turning over the helm to Leahy. "When you get ready to leave, you don't want to kind of just leave it in anybody's hands. You want to leave it in the best hands possible," Snoble said.



Metro Board of Directors and CEO Roger Snoble witness contract signing: from left, CEO Roger Snoble, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, Glendale Mayor Ara Najarian, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Art Leahy, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Director David Fleming and Santa Monica City Councilwoman Pam O'Connor.

"I'm really very proud that he will be able to go forward without skipping a beat and be able to make Metro everything that we all think it would be," said Snoble.

Board member Mark Ridley-Thomas welcomed Leahy and said he looked forward to working on a long list of projects with him and then added: "We welcome you back and I'll see you on Crenshaw Boulevard soon."

Board member Pam O'Connor said Leahy would bring that "regional connection" from Orange County to help Metro's system work with sister counties.



Art Leahy began his transit career as a bus operator in 1971.

While Leahy wasn't driving the bus he arrived in, he probably could have — driving a bus was the first job he held some 38 years ago when he worked for the Southern California Rapid Transit District before it became Metro. Leahy eventually took a top position in bus operations and was instrumental in getting the Metro Blue Line off the ground before he left to take a job out of state.

Leahy's hiring came after a nationwide search netting 12 finalists, said mayor-appointed Director Art Fleming. "I'm very happy to say in Art Leahy, we got the best of the best. It's going to be a great new day for the MTA. And, Roger, you've done a fabulous job over the years. Let's hear it for Roger Snoble."

Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board member Zev Yaroslavsky said, "Whoever said you can't go home again was wrong. Art, you can go home again. And we welcome you home."

[Online:](#) Metro issues press release "Top Transit Official Picked to Head Metro in Los Angeles County"