



**In Transit**

# March/April

# 2009

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk of the General Manager*

## A year to remember

In our last issue, I noted that continuing fiscal challenges lie ahead of us, and promised that we will adjust to these circumstances. Little did I know then how much adjusting we would face only two months later.

Dealing with the recession's impact on Metro's revenue is an all-consuming effort. The sales tax is our primary source of operating revenue, and unfortunately people are not spending as in the past. Recent projections show a \$29-million shortfall this year and another \$35 million in 2010, raising Metro's potential revenue shortfall for 2010 to \$100 million.

Adjusting to deficits of this magnitude will be a struggle in its own right, and we also have major initiatives ahead of us this year. The long-anticipated launch of ORCA, the regional fare card, will be followed by the start of Link light rail service.

We are capable of achieving impressive results, even in tough times. In 2008, when fuel prices were high for everyone, including Metro, we accommodated record numbers of people using our bus, van, and paratransit services (see Performance Corner, page 7). To our credit, we

*Continued on page 2*

## Metro leadership looks back, forward at annual meeting

### Managers, supervisors, and chiefs review 2008 accomplishments and reveal plans for 2009

More than 200 members of Metro's management team gathered at the downtown Seattle Public Library for the fourth annual Managers, Supervisors, and Chiefs Meeting on Jan. 29. The event featured special guest "ORCA," played by Service Development Manager **Victor Obeso**, who reminded everyone that ORCA, the smart card project, will be launched this year. Other topics included recognition of 2008 accomplishments and overviews of performance statistics, Metro's current financial situation, key initiatives for 2009, and the results of the Fuel Savers campaign.



**General Manager Kevin Desmond greets "ORCA."**

### Key initiatives for 2009

- **ORCA**—Launch the ORCA regional smart card
- **Link light rail**—Begin Link light rail operations in July
- **APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference and International Bus Roadeo/ Bus Rapid Transit Conference**—Host over 1,500 transportation professionals who will attend this international event May 1-6
- **2010-2011 budget**—Address Metro's current critical financial situation and maximize all opportunities to work efficiently and cut costs in preparing the 2010-2011 budget
- **Energy and sustainability**—Continue industry-leading use of alternative fuels, energy conservation, and sustainable facility design

*Continued on page 2*

### In this issue

RapidRide shelter .....	3	Short shots .....	6
Metro to host events.....	3	Performance corner .....	7
Kudos .....	4	On the move.....	8



*We'll Get You There*

Continued from page 1

## General Manager

retained many of those customers, even as fuel prices fell nearly in half by year's end. Now we face the challenge of meeting the needs of these customers as our revenues fall rapidly.

In 2008, we also saw a modest year-over-year improvement in on-time performance, even as we experienced increased overloads due to the influx of new riders. We made impressive gains in vehicle maintenance performance, with a 10-year high of more than 5,500 miles between trouble calls. Total accidents were down by about 15 percent from 2007, and accidents per million miles of operation reached a 10-year low of just under 35. Passenger accidents per million miles were also down 20 percent from 2007, reversing a trend that had been rising since 2004. Our rider survey found that passenger satisfaction with safe bus operations remained high at 96 percent, with 73 percent "very satisfied." I mention these accomplishments because I want to personally acknowledge your contributions in making them happen. They are important and deserve recognition.

Metro also achieved operating efficiencies in 2008. Regrettably, operating costs continue to grow faster than inflation, making our situation even more challenging. We are looking for further cost savings and efficiencies, but the reality is that unless we receive revenue from other sources, we may not be able to sustain existing levels of operation, let alone implement the service expansions we have planned. Many positions will go unfilled, meaning increased workloads. Your continued dedication to excellence in the face of these realities will be deeply appreciated—most importantly by our customers.

Finally, I want to add that I value the longstanding and important role that *In Transit* plays in the Metro workplace. Through it we communicate with and about Transit employees, highlight individual and group achievements, and challenge ourselves to do even better. But like everything else, this

Continued from page 1

## Metro annual meeting



(above) Bob Isler, Design and Construction, shares a laugh with Chu Nornang, North Base Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor.

(left) Bob Virkelyst, Marketing and Service Information, reports on the Fuel Savers campaign.

- **Transit Now**—Continue implementing elements of Transit Now, including improvements funded through service partnerships and work on RapidRide
- **Snow plan**—Complete an evaluation of, and make improvements to, Metro's Adverse Weather Plan before the 2009-2010 winter season
- **Customer communication improvements**—Evaluate current ways of communicating with customers, including the Metro Online Web site, and develop and implement improvements
- **Internal employee communication**—Evaluate and improve internal employee communication methods
- **System security**—Continue work by Metro Transit Police and Operations to reduce assaults on operators, and support this effort by installing more security cameras on buses

newsletter is fair game in our current search for savings. We have already cut the number of copies we print in half after some employee groups indicated a preference for reading *In Transit* online, and we'd like to reduce it more. Also, we are now limiting the number of pages per issue, and may reduce the number of issues per year.

Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication to our mission.

—Kevin Desmond, General Manager

### ***In Transit* online**

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/aboutus/intransit](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/aboutus/intransit)

# RapidRide shelter prototype takes shape

**A** talented team of employees from the Power and Facilities Building Systems and Maintenance group is turning ideas into reality as it builds a passenger shelter expressly designed for Metro's new RapidRide bus service. Working from consultant concepts and pictures, these tradesmen have applied decades of hands-on experience and skills to create a shelter with a whole new look.

After two years of conceptual design work, the team began building the prototype shelter in February. **Troy Jaeger**, facilities constructor and a certified welder with 15 years at Metro, and Crew Lead **Daren Bassen** led the fabrication process, and were assisted by teammates **Steve Edwards**, facilities utility laborer, and **Mike Hazard**, facilities constructor. Painting and final assembly was a team effort for the entire shelter crew, including **Chuck Meredith, Marv Miller, Lee Kelley, and Bill Wilton.**

Located at the South Facilities Shop near South Base, the Building Systems and Maintenance group is responsible for skilled facilities maintenance projects and includes journey-level welders, plumbers, carpenters, painters, and building operating engineers. "We are all quite pleased with the prototype," said



**Troy Jaeger, Facilities Constructor, welds a corner of the roof frame for the prototype RapidRide shelter.**

Shop Supervisor **Stephanie Erickess.** "It is attractive, functional, unique, and easy to maintain. We hope our passengers will like it, too."

Metro has recently taken delivery of a new prototype RapidRide bus. It is currently under review by the procurement team, and Metro employees will have an opportunity to preview it this spring.

RapidRide is part of Metro's Transit Now program. Initial RapidRide

services are planned for five busy travel corridors: Pacific Highway S, Bellevue/Redmond, West Seattle, Ballard/Uptown, and Aurora Avenue N. The first RapidRide service, the A Line (Pacific Highway S), is planned to start in June 2010. For more information about Transit Now and RapidRide, visit Metro's Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/TransitNow](http://www.kingcounty.gov/TransitNow).

## Metro to host international conferences and roдео in May

**M**etro will be the proud host of the American Public Transportation Association's annual Bus and Paratransit Conference and the concurrent International Bus Roдео/Bus Rapid Transit Conference May 1-6. More than 1,500 transit professionals are expected to attend North America's largest and most comprehensive learning experience for the bus and paratransit industry.

The conference includes dozens of sessions on topics affecting transit, technical tours offering a behind-the-scenes look at Metro, and the ever-popular bus display and bus products and services showcase.

On Sunday, May 3, Metro will host the International Bus Roдео at the Safety and Training Center in Tukwila. More than 200 bus operators

and mechanics from transit systems across North America are expected to participate in competitions that showcase their skills in safe driving and vehicle maintenance.

Watch for information on how you can volunteer to help—and get a chance to attend the educational sessions.

# KUDOS IN TRANSIT



Rideshare Operations Supervisor Syd Pawlowski (far right) and Project Manager Andrea Maillet receive the award from King County Executive Ron Sims (left) and King County Councilmember Dow Constantine (center).

■ **Rideshare Operations wins 2009 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award**—Metro’s Rideshare Operations was honored Jan. 15 with the 2009 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award, Workgroup Category. The group took advantage of a Federal Transit Administration ruling allowing the use of Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds for vanpool fare assistance. “Reliable, quality transportation is hard to come by for low-wage workers,” said Project Manager **Andrea Maillet**. “Many have to choose affordable but distant housing, find jobs in reverse-commute locations, and accept non-standard work shifts.” With fare-assistance funding, Rideshare Operations developed a “virtual voucher” program to cover up to 50 percent of a low-wage worker’s monthly van fare. This program has already supported the formation of 16 vanpool groups among low-wage commuters.

■ **Laurie Carter named supervisor of the sign-up**—**Laurie Carter**, a 22-year first-line supervisor now working as the North Base planner, was named the most recent Supervisor of the Sign-up. Carter previously served on the HASTUS™ project team that replaced the BOSS/TOPS system. Her work ethic and attention to detail combined to support her co-workers during the rollout of HASTUS™ at each of seven bases. She sacrificed her schedule, vacations, and days off to ensure



**Supervisor of the Sign-up  
Laurie Carter**

the timely implementation of the project, and continues to play a key role as a HASTUS™ expert, assisting both co-workers and base operations staff.

■ **Teamwork avoids potential tragedy**—One morning last November, an elderly passenger on a coach at the Bellevue Transit Center appeared to be confused about his destination. South Base Operator **Jeffery Brockmeier** called the control center for help, and Coordinator **Brian Mauer** dispatched District 42 Supervisor **Jim Sage** to the scene. After determining that the passenger wanted to go to downtown Seattle, Sage helped him board a Route 550 bus. He also alerted District 1 Supervisor **Michael Dennis** in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. Dennis met the coach in the tunnel to check on the passenger, and learned that his condition had deteriorated. He requested medical aid from the Seattle Fire Department, which transported the passenger to a hospital.



**Metro Transit Police Detective Jesse Herrera, left, and Deputy Luke Hillman, right.**

■ **Transit Police name deputy and detective of the year**—Deputy **Luke Hillman** is the newest Metro Transit Police (MTP) Deputy of the Year. Known by peers and street contacts as a tenacious and hardworking officer, Hillman follows every lead to its limit. He has effectively addressed



**Metro vehicles helped in the evacuation effort during January flooding.**

narcotics, prostitution, and code-of-conduct issues along Metro routes. In 2007-2008, he and his partner made hundreds of contacts along certain problem routes, resulting in more than 300 arrests with charges filed by the Prosecutor's Office and a significant reduction in crime along major transit corridors. Detective **Jesse Herrera**, MTP's Detective of the Year, is a three-year member of MTP's Criminal Investigation team. His significant contributions include teaching deputies how to best meet case preparation and prosecution needs; meticulously tracking statistics used by command staff, Metro managers, and the County Council; and providing accurate pictures of work requirements and crime trends to justify staffing decisions. Herrera also provides sound leadership by helping MTP deputies better understand how their field- and paperwork affect prosecutions and by being a resource, both on and off duty, to answer their questions.

■ **Metro assists in flood rescue**— Metro buses and Access vans helped evacuate 48 residents of the Mount Si Transitional Health Center in North Bend on Jan. 7. The nursing home was threatened by floodwaters from the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

■ **Operator thanked in *Seattle Times***—A reader wrote to the *Seattle Times* "Rant and Rave" column on Nov. 2 to praise "Renee, the heroic Metro driver who took care of me after I was robbed by a gang. She called the police, let me call my husband, sheltered me in her bus and she provided her account to the police. Renee, I can't possibly thank you enough."

## Transit operators of the month

### January 2009

Atlantic Base: **David Fisher**  
 Bellevue Base: (operator declined)  
 Central Base: **Hans Welz**  
 East Base: **Brian Hopkins**  
 North Base: **Steve Frontis**  
 Ryerson Base: **Marc Langeman**  
 South Base: **Richard Verzani**

### February 2009

Atlantic Base: **Sandra Peterson**  
 Bellevue Base: **Craig Jamieson**  
 Central Base: **Angela Wick**  
 East Base: **Mary Busam**  
 North Base: **Stanley Cogdill**  
 Ryerson Base: **Thomas Travis**  
 South Base: **Valerie Longland**

## In Transit



*We'll Get You There*

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to ***In Transit***, MS KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Clemenger**: 206-263-6482 or [anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov](mailto:anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov).

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# SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

## News briefs in and around the Transit Division



The first graduating class of rail operators and chiefs celebrates by sporting classic rail headgear.

■ **Metro rail operators ready to roll**—The first five groups of Metro rail operators have completed their training and certification, and a sixth class began training March 9. A total of 59 rail operators will be trained before the start of dry-run (no-passenger) service in May. Between now and then, the new operators will help Kinkisharyo Inc., which built the rail cars, test and “burn in” the cars along the rail alignment from S Royal Brougham Way to the Tukwila International Boulevard Station.

■ **Service Quality team receives bomb training**—A Service Quality chief and two first-line supervisors went to New Mexico last November for a four-day training course in bomb awareness that was financed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. **Rudy Allen**, Service Quality chief overseeing the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel; **David Oliver**, Service Quality supervisor and instructor for new supervisors in training; and **Terry Rhoads**, now a Link rail supervisor, came away with a healthy understanding of the dangers associated with weapons of

mass destruction and actions that can reduce the risk to first responders and others at the incident scene.

■ **Light rail SCADA team makes news**—Rail Section Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) specialists **Sean**

**Bogart** and **Bob Wells** and recently promoted SCADA and facilities chief **Mike Erickson** were featured in the Nov/Dec 2008 issue of *Insight*, the magazine published by Local 17 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers. The article focused on their role in the Light Rail Section’s drive to bring Link rail services



SCADA Specialists **Bob Wells**, **Mike Erickson**, and **Sean Bogart** (left to right) graced the cover of *Insight* magazine. Photo by Taryn Gerhardt, IFPTE 17.

online in 2009. The team is running fast as it works with Sound Transit and contractors on large projects central to the monitoring and control of bus and light rail vehicle traffic infrastructures and fire and life safety systems. The issue with the article is available on the Local 17 Web site at [www.ifpte17.org](http://www.ifpte17.org).



The Metro Transit Police officers who assisted with security for the inauguration in Washington D.C. are (from left): Deputy **Scott Dery**, Sergeant **Barb Etienne**, Deputy **Paul Schwenn**, Deputy **Chris Adams**, and Deputy **Pat McCurdy**.

■ **Transit police serve at DC inauguration**—Five Metro Transit Police officers responded to a call from the Washington (D.C.) Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for interagency security assistance for the inauguration of President Barack Obama. The officers provided security at Metrorail stations as record crowds took part in the day’s history-making events. An article about their unique assignment is available online at [www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/NewsCenter/Reports/MTP-DC.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/NewsCenter/Reports/MTP-DC.aspx)



## Performance corner

### Ridership passes all previous records

According to Metro’s preliminary count, 2008 saw 118.4 million boardings on our motor and trolley buses, a seven-percent increase over 2007. Monthly boardings topped 10 million—which had only happened once before—six times last year.

Ridership growth was particularly strong during the summer, when gas prices soared above \$4 a gallon. But even late in the year, when gas prices fell by nearly half and local employment began to sag, ridership was still higher than a year earlier. Even the 2008 fare increase and December storms could not stop Metro from setting another annual record.

Recent service increases and improvements, including those funded by Transit Now, played an important role in boosting ridership to record levels. Also, Metro has restructured and consolidated services over the last five years, adding destinations and hours of service and improving frequency on many routes. In areas where service has been restructured to better meet travelers’ needs, ridership growth has been well above the system average. With these and other service improvements plus the influx of new passengers, Metro’s service productivity has improved each year since 2003, reaching a record-breaking 33.7 boardings per hour in 2008—seven percent higher than 2007 and 20 percent higher than 2003 (see chart).

Metro restructured service on the Eastside in 2008 in response to comments and suggestions received

from riders during an extensive outreach process. In February, with funding from Transit Now, Metro launched two new routes connecting Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland neighborhoods to Eastside activity centers; revised existing services to better match eastside travel patterns; and increased frequencies on many routes. In September we invested service hours earmarked for Rapidly Developing Areas under Transit Now in east I-90 communities, bringing direct express connections for North Bend and Snoqualmie Ridge commuters to downtown Seattle for the first time.

Immediately after the spring 2008 service change, ridership increased by 15 percent on the revised routes—twice the system average increase between the service changes of spring 2007 and 2008. Because a new or changed route takes about three years to mature, we expect ridership on the new and revised Eastside services to continue to grow.

Other ridership records broken in 2008 include Metro Vanpools,



Monthly boardings topped 10 million six times last year.

which delivered 2.8 million commute trips (a 20-percent increase from 2007), and Vanshare vans, which provided nearly 400,000 commute trips (a 29 percent increase from 2007). In November the VanPool program passed a milestone with 1,000 vanpools in service, even after vanpool fares went up 15 percent in October. VanPool ended the year with a record 1,031 vanpool groups in service. Some of that success is attributed to the very successful 2008 “Fill it Up, Again!” program, which distributed \$235,016 in incentives to 4,368 participants.

Last but not least, the South Lake Union Streetcar completed its first full year of operation in 2008, with ridership exceeding expectations at more than 400,000.

*Continued from page 8*

### On the move

**Lance J. Remy**, equipment service worker (South)—Jan. 26

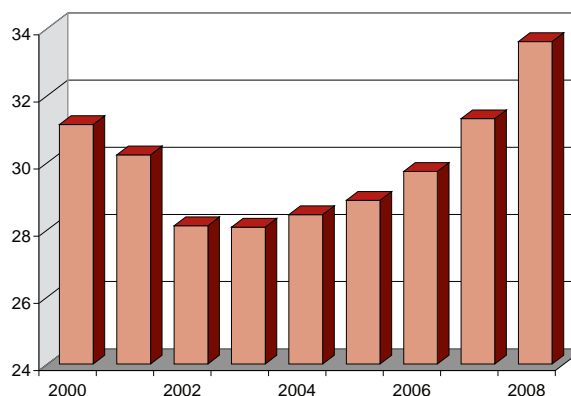
**Reginald L. Smith**, electronic technician (Atlantic)—Jan. 26

**Darrell W. Shay**, equipment service worker (Ryerson)—Jan. 26 (from part-time operator, East)

### In Our Thoughts

**Tom Moore**, part-time coach operator, 25+ years (Operations); passed away Feb. 16

Transit passengers per platform hour



Service productivity set a new record last year.



# ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

## Retirements

### Operations

**Nancy Wilson**, supervisor (Service Communications)–April 17; 30+ years

**Michael Yamamoto**, coordinator/first-line supervisor (Service Communications)–Oct. 31; 33+ years

### Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

**Bob Carroll**, senior transportation planner (Accessible Services)–Feb. 27; 22+ years

### Service Development

**Ross Hudson**, senior transit planner (Transit Route Facilities)–April 1; 24 years

## Promotions and Job Changes

### Information Technology

**Shirley Dunphy** to IT project manager II (OIRM) from project/program manager IV (Transit IT)

### Light Rail

**Arnie Becker** to rail supervisor from coordinator (Service Communications)

**Tom Jones** to operations superintendent from rail operations chief (Rail Section)

**Ben Leeden** to MSC chief from MSC worker (Rail Section)

**Terry Rhoads** to rail supervisor from first-line supervisor (Service Quality)

Transferred to rail operator from bus operator (base):

**Frances Aragon** (East), **Michael Biderbost** (North), **Paul Bond** (North), **Donald Brady** (North), **Warren Davidson** (Central), **Deborah Davis** (North), **John Dibble** (Ryerson), **Jeff Doppmann**

(South), **Michael Gish** (Central), **Paul Gumapac** (East), **Annette James** (South), **Kavin James** (South), **Steven Johnson** (Central), **Ross King** (North), **Alan Kreitzberg** (North), **John Krishun** (South), **Michael Latham** (Atlantic), **Harold Lewis** (Ryerson), **Jorge Liceaga** (North), **Larry Love** (South), **Bryan Mathews** (Central), **Charles Miller** (East), **Jeffrey Morgan** (South), **Brian Ormond** (Central), **Ryan Perrault** (North), **Richard Pflueger** (North), **Masla Pillay** (North), **Bigyan Pratap** (Central), **Edgardo Reyes** (North), **Karen Rispoli** (Ryerson), **Kurt Rossbach** (South), **Kenneth Rybock** (North), **Karl Solberg** (South), **Flennard Stelly** (Ryerson), **James Struck** (East), **Douglas Thomson** (South), **Mark Vandermark** (South)

### Operations

**Jeff Wamsley** to supervisor, Transit Control Center, from supervisor, Bellevue Base

### Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

**Terri Lewis** to customer services coordinator/term-limited (Accessible Services) from project administrator (Operations)

### Power and Facilities

**John Aune**, project program manager II (term-limited) position ended Jan. 1; duties acquired by Wendy Chin and Tom Slade

**John Campagnaro** to acting electrician constructor crew chief from electrician constructor

### Sales and Customer Services

**Keith Haarsager** to customer information specialist from pass sales representative

## New Hires

### Light Rail

**Jose Gutierrez**, track and ROW worker–Feb. 9

**Eddie Holmes, Jr.**, electrical worker–Dec. 15

**Calvin Lee**, electro mechanic–Dec. 30

**Christopher Muhich**, electro mechanic–Dec. 30

**Michael Parker**, electrical worker–Dec. 16

**Balwinder Singh**, rail supervisor–Dec. 1

**William (Jeremy) White**, electrical worker–Jan. 30

### Operations

**Karen Blacketer**, fiscal specialist II–Feb. 11

**Laura Ornelas**, fiscal specialist II–Feb. 23

### Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

**Anne Bruskland**, strategic planning and project manager–Jan. 19 (from Department of Executive Services; replaces Barbara Lopuszynski who retired June 30)

### Power and Facilities

**Rod Hanson**, electrician constructor (temp)–Jan. 26

### Sales and Customer Services

**Brandon Banks**, assigned customer information specialist (Customer Information)–Dec. 24

**Robert Krugh**, pass sales representative (Pass Sales)–Dec. 3

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Stephen D. Burling**, electronic technician (Component Supply Center)–Jan. 26

**Henry C. Hamburg**, equipment service worker (Ryerson)–Jan. 26

*Continued on page 7*