



In Transit September/October 2009

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk
of the General
Manager*

Walking a budget tightrope

Many important issues and events are getting media coverage and competing for your attention, including the November election, when King County voters will choose a new executive. Here at Metro, the biggest issue weighing on our minds is how we will address a projected \$213 million gap in our 2010/2011 biennial budget.

In August, Executive Kurt Triplett announced a 9-point budget plan to address not only the short-term (two-year) problem, but a growing deficit that could reach a cumulative \$546 million over the next four years. The King County Council has put forward its own ideas, too. Then there are the findings of the council's auditor, whose final report—released Sept. 15—identified a variety of ways in which Metro might reduce expenses.

Over the past several weeks, I reached out to Metro employees through a series of town hall-style meetings at several different worksites (story at right). At those meetings, we discussed Metro's budget situation and had some very frank question-and-answer exchanges. From our discussions, I gained many insights and ideas, and I thank you for your candor and input.

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General Manager Kevin Desmond lays out the facts about Metro's finances to a standing-room-only audience at East Base.

Straight talk about Metro's finances

General Manager Kevin Desmond visited nine Metro worksites in late August and early September to give detailed presentations about Metro's financial situation, followed by lively question-and-answer sessions with employees.

Desmond first gave an overview of Metro's serious budget deficit, caused by a steep decline in sales tax revenue that is a direct result of the deep recession. To address this deficit, he outlined Metro's nine-point plan, which includes deferring bus service expansion, substantially cutting Metro's capital program, making non-service related cuts, raising new revenue through a property tax swap, tapping into operating reserves, increasing fares by 25 cents in 2011, using fleet replacement reserves, implementing operating efficiencies identified in the transit performance audit, and reducing bus service. (To learn more about the plan, visit www.kingcounty.gov/exec/news/release/2009/August/6TriplettTransitProposal.aspx.)

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We'll Get You There

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General Manager

We are giving due consideration to every plausible budget option, regardless of its source—audit report, employee suggestion, the hard work of assigned staff, the County Council, or the Executive. Collectively, we are moving forward toward eventual closure of the long-term budget gap. As one example of an avenue we're exploring, the audit report suggests that we take a closer look at scheduling efficiencies, including shorter layover times. We will consider such efficiencies when and if they are feasible, but I can assure you that we will balance their potential impacts on service quality for our customers and quality-of-life issues for our coach operators against any possible cost savings. We have also been called upon to increase the extent of our strategic business planning. However, some suggested approaches appear to require additional resources and/or shifts in focus, so these need to be examined more closely.

Ours will be a delicate balancing act as we move forward along this budget tightrope, if we are to continue providing the safe, reliable, and convenient services that our customers have come to expect from us. But I have full confidence that we will succeed.

My confidence stems from knowing what Metro employees are capable of achieving when faced with a challenge. You have proven yourselves time after time. If I needed reassurance, I would only have to look at all the contributions made by the recent nominees to Metro's 2009 Wall of Fame (see page 4). Through their efforts, and the efforts of so many others who also could have been nominated, we maintain a tradition of excellence in the community and among our peers, year after year. To the winners and to all the nominees, I extend my congratulations and sincere appreciation.

And to all Metro employees, thank you for your continued professionalism and service to our customers and the community.

—Kevin Desmond



The new Redmond Park-and-Ride Garage, above, was designed to fit in with the multi-use building next door (visible on right).

New Redmond park-and-ride garage opens

On July 6, Metro opened the new Redmond Park-and-Ride Garage, a \$10.5 million facility that replaces the surface park-and-ride that operated on the same site for more than 30 years. The new garage has 385 parking stalls on three above-ground levels and features glass-enclosed elevators, 12 electric-vehicle charging stations, and emergency alarm stations and security cameras on every floor.

The garage is next to the Redmond Transit Center, which opened in 2008, and sits on the east half of the former park-and-ride lot. Trammell Crow Residential is developing the other half of the site into a transit-oriented development with both residential and commercial space.

Metro's project team worked cooperatively with the City of Redmond to incorporate the park-and-ride garage and transit center into the city's urban plan for NE 83rd Street. This included connecting pedestrians to an adjacent skate park and coordinating the garage's exterior and bus shelters with the transit-oriented development project under construction on the south side of the garage. Sheldon Teel, Metro's Design and Construction project manager, said the project represented "the successful outcome of a long-term collaborative team effort."

The project team consisted of Metro's Design and Construction Section for Project and Construction Management (Paul Miller, project/resident engineer, Jack Schultz, site inspector, and Teel, project manager); KPFF Consulting Engineers; the City of Redmond; and Bayley Construction.

In Transit



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

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New online tool provides “breaking news” for commuters

Metro customers have a way to learn about events that may affect their bus rides during commute hours.

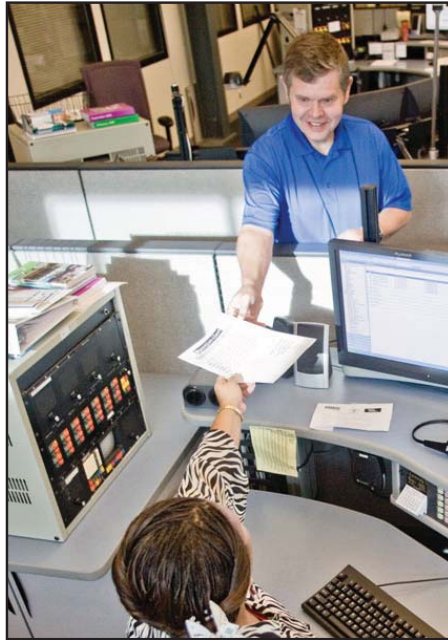
“Eye on Your Metro Commute” offers updated information online about bus service disruptions. The service was developed as a pilot project by Sales and Customer Services after last winter’s string of storms and flooding, and is scheduled to run through the end of this year. Metro will then evaluate it for possible future applications.

To try it out, point your browser to Metro Online’s home page (www.kingcounty.gov/metro) or go directly to the Eye on Your Metro Commute blog page at <http://metrocommute.wordpress.com>.

Metro provides coverage from 6 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. on weekdays, with bulletins about construction projects, accidents, sporting events, and other incidents affecting transit service. This involves a lot of behind-the-scenes work by members of the Customer Information Technological Resources and Solutions (CITRS) staff, one of whom is stationed in the Transit Control Center during each weekday commute period to work alongside the communications coordinators. This employee gathers information on situations that could affect transit and passes it to a second CITRS employee, who decides whether it warrants publication. If it does, he or she passes it to Metro’s Customer Information Office call center, where it is available to customers who call in. Significant disruptions are also posted to the Eye on Your Metro Commute blog, which automatically updates the Metro Online home page. Depending on the nature of the disruption, CITRS may also send an e-mail message to subscribers who have signed up to receive KCMetro-Alerts, another new tool added since last winter’s storms.

This collaboration between Operations and CITRS has turned out to be mutually beneficial, because information flows both ways. CITRS staff members alert Operations about service issues that they learn about via customer phone calls.

“Having CITRS staff in the Transit Control Center during peak periods has enhanced the speed (at which) information gets out to the riding public,” said Coordinator Carl Kietzke. “Working together, we can get information on service disruptions to our ridership while it is still current.”



Deborah “DJ” Johnson gets an update from Mark Foss in the Transit Control Center.

Continued from page 1 **Straight talk about Metro’s finances**

“Even with these actions, Metro faces a long process of stabilizing its finances,” Desmond said. Sales tax is the agency’s primary funding source—funding more than 70 percent of its day-to-day operations—but is very volatile. “A long-term solution will likely require a more stable funding source,” Desmond said. “We’ll have to work with the council and state legislature to identify funding options.”

Even with these efforts, Desmond said, “we’re going to be a somewhat diminished organization. But our customers and the general public will continue to expect and rely upon excellent Metro service. Everyone in the organization plays an important role in ensuring that excellence.”

Let it snow — we’re getting ready



The snow that blanketed the county in 2008 had barely melted before Metro

began evaluating its operations and communications during the long period of severe weather.

Over the past year we have been reviewing, revising, and practicing storm-response procedures. We have also been improving customer communications, and will introduce a new alert system later this year.

Watch for details in the next issue of *In Transit*.

Honorees named to

2009 Wall of Fame

Sixteen individuals and seven teams have been named to Metro's prestigious Wall of Fame, which recognizes employees who demonstrate exemplary work on behalf of internal and/or external customers. *In Transit* congratulates these nominees (see complete list at right) on joining the Wall of Fame family.

From this large and deserving group, Metro management had the unenviable task of choosing only two individuals and one team to be honored as the 2009 Wall of Fame "winners." Those selected were:



The APTA conference and rodeo organizing committee: front row, left to right: **Deborah Brockway** (Sales and Customer Services), **Christine Anderson** (General Manager's Office), **Alina Tanzer** (Power and Facilities), **Dan Brand** (Vehicle Maintenance), **Gail Israelson** (Metro Transit Police); back row, left to right: **Ruthic Allen** (Operations), **Ref Lindmark** (Service Development), **Jim Boe** (Power and Facilities), **Ray Coffey** (Safety), **Don Campbell** (Design and Construction), **Ted Day** (Service Development).

APTA Bus Conference and Rodeo Organizing Committee

Under the leadership of **Christine Anderson**, the APTA Bus Conference and Rodeo Organizing Committee executed one of the best national bus events in recent memory, according to comments by APTA organizers and participants. Committee members worked tirelessly for more than a year to plan activities, assist with venue plans, and coordinate with local and national groups. Their efforts, and the efforts of many others who helped to implement their plans, brought positive national attention to King County, Metro Transit, and the City of Seattle.



David Morrison

David Morrison

Dave Morrison (Office of Regional Transportation Planning, KCDOT) negotiates the tricky and demanding paths to and through state and federal funding sources. He's invaluable in getting to "yes" with these sources, and also with handling the huge amount of government funds that come to Metro for capital and operating purposes. Much of this funding is creatively mingled and leveraged in partnership with an array of public and private entities. Morrison's good-heartedness, optimistic energy, and lawyerly skills facilitate this flow of dollars that affects nearly all aspects of Metro.

Metro Transit 2009 Wall of Fame Nominees

Congratulations to all Metro Transit 2009 Wall of Fame nominees and winners*!

Individual Nominees

Design and Construction: Gary Kriedt

General Manager's Office: Pat Fulmer

Information Technology: Catherine Boon*, Kathryn Gish

Metro Transit Police: Senior Detective Jesse Herrera

Operations: Jean Kattar, Vicki LaRitz, Lance Norton

Power and Facilities: Craig Hall

Rail (Link): Amanda Nightingale

Sales and Customer Service: Dick Harrell, Nancy Morgan

Service Development: Larry Moore, David Morrison*

Transit Safety: June Kamau

Vehicle Maintenance: Dan Brand

Team nominees

APTA Bus Conference and Rodeo Organizing Committee*: Ruthie Allen, Christine Anderson, Stan Asis, Tricia Barbachan, Glenn Bartolome, Scott Beasley, Jim Boe, Dan Brand, Deborah Brockway, Don Campbell, Ray Coffey, Ted Day, Dan Gauthier, Gail Israelson, Vicki LaRitz, Ref Lindmark, Alina Tanzer, Bob Virkelyst, Linda Wraith

Link Community Connections (ST=Sound Transit): Mike Bergman (ST), Katie Chalmers, Pat Cleary, Anna Clemenger, Sarah Driggs, Ellen Hansen, Doug Johnson, Jack Lattemann, Sarah Luthens, Carol Masnik (ST), Jim Moore (ST), Jackie Phillips, Ben Smith (ST), Sara Stefano

North Maintenance Facility (formerly North Lake Union)

■ **Design and Construction:** Dave Crippen, John Davis, Paul Eng, Barbara Fariss-Bateman, Rand Juliano, Mike Paulson, Isaiah Pullet, Ron Quist, Charlie Reynolds, Sheldon Teel

■ **Office of Information Resource Management:** Gretchen Prindle, Hanker Su

■ **Power and Facilities:** Robin Abille, Archie Alexander, Wendy Chin, Charles Hopper, Cathy Johnson, Phil Johnson, Erik Martinson, Talon Swanson

■ **Prosecuting Attorney's Office:** Scott Johnson

■ **Real Estate Services (Executive Services):** Bob Thompson

Online Commuter Van Orientation: Joy Baldrige, Jan Dahl, Diane Davis, Lorraine Desrochers, Jason Halvorson, Mika Imori, Julie Paone

Operations Training Chiefs: AJ Norton, Dan Porter, Lynn Riley

ORCA: Monique Allen, Phil Branham, Deborah Brockway, Candace Carlson, Rajan Cheriell, Shirley Collins, Carol Cooper, Jeff Craig, Bruce Dahl, Mark Davis, Bob Dryer, Laurie Elder, Janey Elliott, Tom Friedman, Tessa Gamble, Stephen Heard, Leo Hrechanyk, Theresa Huey, Harmony Hunter, Kathy Kelly, Terrie Kennedy, Carl Kietzke, Mark Konecny, Rick Lambert, Michael List, David Magidman, Karen Martin, Kim Martin, Steve Masumoto, Kathleen McMurray, Carol Merrill, Larry Moore, Lisa Muhammad, Keith Nelson, Dan Overgaard, Dan Porter, Deena Ratner, Dave Regnier, Lynn Riley, Chuck Sawyer, Dale Schneider, Charlene Sellhast, Gary Shumway, Ulta Slee, Steve Stark, Michael Stewart, Rebecca Switaj, Bob Trantina, Sheryl Wampler, Mayre Washington, Lois Watt, Mike Wold

Smart Card "SWAT" Subject Area Advisory Team (SAAT): Phil Branham, Deborah Brockway, Laurie Elder, Dave Hollar, Teresa Huey, Mark Konecny, Carol Merrill, Lisa Muhammad, Deena Ratner, Dianna Sumabat, Gayle Torgerson, Bob Virkelyst, Lois Watt



Catherine Boon

Catherine Boon

Many Metro staff members have worked to make ORCA a reality, but **Catherine Boon** served as Metro's face on the project. Calm and effective on many levels, she helped keep the project on track. It was not always a zen-like experience; she admits to "freaking out" at times. As Metro's site manager on ORCA, she dealt with technical details, complex business issues such as fare policy, and political sensitivities. She forged good working relationships with technical consultants, Metro Vehicle Maintenance employees, managers, and County Council staff members. She represented Metro's interests through a consensus-driven process involving six other agency partners, maintaining good relations with her counterparts in those agencies while effectively representing Metro's unique business needs.

KUDOS IN TRANSIT

■ **Rideshare lands award**—The national Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) has named Rideshare Operations’ online



Tom Devlin, transportation planner with King County Metro Rideshare Operations, holds his agency’s award from the Association for Commuter Transportation

online orientation has far exceeded expectations, contributing to an 88-percent increase in the number of approved shared-van drivers and bookkeepers in 2009 over the same period in 2008. Doing many orientations online instead of in person has saved more than \$12,000 and eliminated significant administrative and staff overtime costs. It also fulfilled a longstanding request by participants, giving them the flexibility to do their orientation when it is most convenient for them.

commuter-van orientation program as the winner of its 2009 “Renovation Award”. The award recognizes Rideshare for using technology to address commuter-van orientation challenges, breathing new life into its established program and helping to sustain and manage future program growth. The

■ **Metro shines at state bus rodeo**—The Washington State Public Transportation Rodeo was

held Aug. 29-30 at Pierce Transit in Lakewood. Metro’s team of **Leonard Emry, Larry Fitzpatrick, and Ryan Stringfellow** took top honors in the Maintenance Team Competition, and Metro Operator **Tammy Klein** marked her first statewide competition by taking third place in the 40-foot coach division.



Metro’s CAT program supports 22 agencies operating more than 60 vans.

■ **CAT aids Circle of Friends**—In July, Metro’s Community Access Transportation (CAT) program provided five vans and a small operating grant to Circle of Friends, a regional agency that provides adult day care and health services to frail seniors, mostly of Russian descent. Circle of Friends had just lost its ability to provide transportation service to its clients via Metro’s Access Transportation due to state budget cuts. With our vans and grant, the agency set up its own transportation service, which provided more than 4,000 trips during its first month. The partnership is a win-win for both agencies—Circle of Friends can now provide a higher level of service to all of its clients, including more direct rides for customers who are particularly frail, while Metro’s cost is only one-eighth that of providing Access service to the same clients.

Transit operators of the month

July 2009

Atlantic Base: **Latonya Plummer**
 Bellevue Base: **Chuck Davis**
 Central Base: **Christopher Fagan**
 East Base: **Victor Fraire**
 North Base: **John Bazzi**
 Ryerson Base: **John Williams**
 South Base: **Mary Hollis**

August 2009

Atlantic Base: **Ravi Chand**
 Bellevue Base: **Gale Peterman**
 Central Base: **Eric Berquist**
 East Base: **Lucas Voorhees**
 North Base: **Teklai Negash**
 Ryerson Base: **Andrew Bobich**
 South Base: **Cathy Brouillette**

September 2009

Atlantic Base: (operator declined)
 Bellevue Base: **Glen Rikansrud**
 Central Base: **Michael Higgins**
 East Base: **Karin Peterson**
 North Base: **Svetlana Brushchenko**
 Ryerson Base: **Derek Scarlett**
 South Base: **Valerie Allen**

■ **Transit supervisors do the STP**—Metro supervisors **George Stites** and **Denny Pingeon** (both in Vehicle Maintenance at South Base) joined 9,998 other cyclists in the 30th annual Group Health Seattle to Portland Classic bicycle ride in July. Stites and Pingeon set themselves apart from the majority of participants by riding the entire 202.25-mile route in a single day. The ride, better known as the “STP”, is the largest multi-day bicycle event in the northwest, and

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SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division



Orion hybrid buses like this example will be delivered to Metro in 2010.

■ **Feds fund new Metro buses**—Metro plans to buy 93 new hybrid-electric Orion buses from Daimler Buses North America, with options to buy more than 400 additional coaches over the next five years. A \$46 million federal stimulus grant will help pay for the new buses. Adding these hybrid-electric buses to the fleet will complement the 235 hybrid articulated coaches that have been part of Metro’s fleet since 2004, and will further expand Metro’s reputation as one of the greenest transit agencies in North America. The buses will replace Metro’s fleet of diesel Gillig buses, which will be 14 years old by the time they are replaced—two years beyond the typical useful life of a transit bus.

■ **“Before” data gathered**—In early September, Metro research staff and consultants rode buses on Routes 8, 36, 48, 106, and 174, conducting passenger surveys as the first part of a “before/after” evaluation of the September service change. The “after” phase is scheduled for October and November, when customers have had some experience with their changed service. The results of both the pre- and post-service change surveys should be available by the end of December.

■ **Fair makes safety fun**—More than 350 people attended the annual South Campus Safety and Security Fair, sponsored by South Base and Power and Facilities on Sept. 3. Displays, music by the all-Metro employee band “Destination,” food, and the ever-popular dunk tank entertained participants, while 27 vendors offered information on safety, equipment, tools, and King County benefits.



SCOTT BEASLEY

The King County Sheriff’s Office SWAT team demonstrated hostage rescues on a Metro bus at the South Campus Safety and Security Fair on Sept. 3.

■ **Vintage bus tours**—Fall is a busy time for the Metro Employee Historic Vehicle Association, which offers tours on restored vintage buses that provided regular service in the Seattle area in years past. On Sept. 26, the group



This is just one of the vintage buses in the Metro Employee Historic Vehicle Associations’s collection.

offered a three-hour night trolley tour of Seattle’s nightlife neighborhoods. If you missed that, you’re not too late for the Fall Foliage Tour, a four-hour ride through the Cascade foothills with stops for photos and lunch, on Oct. 25; and the Santa’s Lights Tour, a two-and-a-half-hour tour of Seattle’s best Christmas lights, on Dec. 12. For more information, visit the association’s website, www.mehva.org, or call 206-684-1816.

fast, easy, WOW! Metro's got news for you!

psst. follow these tips for a better ride!

connect and go!

- eye on your Metro commute tracker
- KC Metro alerts
- KC twitter
- KC news blog
- RPIN

for more information: www.kingcounty.gov/metro

King County METRO We'll Get You There

- have your fare ready
- standing? move to the back of the bus
- remove your bags from the seat
- speak up if you want to use the back door
- give up your seat to those that need it more than you
- remove bulky packs when standing in the aisle
- don't cross in front of the bus
- know the alternatives - Metro has many choices

for more information: www.kingcounty.gov/metro 206-553-3000 TTY Relay: 711

Metro’s new pocket card/bookmarks keep useful info at riders’ fingertips.

■ **Card puts resources at customers’ fingertips**—Metro operators are stocking new cards in their coaches’ timetable racks, designed for use by customers as pocket cards or bookmarks. The cards have information about Metro’s new options for staying informed about changes in bus service, including new electronic tools such as “Eye on Your Metro Commute” (see page 3). The bookmark’s reverse side offers suggestions on how passengers can make their bus rides better for themselves, their fellow riders, and the bus operators.



ON THE MOVE

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

Retirements

Sales and Customer Services

Richard “Dick” Harrell, functional analyst III (CITRS)
— Sept. 30; 15+ years

Promotions and Job Changes

Power and Facilities

Brian Cady to acting electrician constructor crew chief from electrician constructor
John Campagnaro, to electrician constructor from acting electrician constructor crew chief
Greg Nicksic to acting line crew chief from utility line worker

Rail

Gregory Banks to lead rail facilities custodian from lead custodian (Executive Services/Facilities Management)
Walter Green to rail laborer from utility laborer (Power and Facilities)
Keith Kaufman to grounds specialist from lead grounds specialist (Power and Facilities)
Rogelio Mariano to facilities electrician (from Executive Services/Facilities Mgmt.)
Thomas McAuliffe to SCADA systems specialist from electrician constructor (Power and Facilities)
Gregg Reilly to rail laborer from utility laborer (Power and Facilities)

Sales and Customer Services

Terri Lewis to marketing and sales specialist II from customer services coordinator (term-limited temporary)
Susan Whitmore to communications specialist IV (on loan to Marine Division) from program/project manager III (Commuter Trip Reduction Services)

New Hires

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Kathleen Royal, fiscal specialist II (Rideshare Operations) — July 22

Power and Facilities

Frank Blixt, utility lineman — June 15
Andrew Samorano, administrative specialist III (temp) — July 22

Rail

Anibal Basilio, rail facilities custodian — June 29
Laurel Carmelo, rail facilities custodian — July 20
Anthony Couet, electro mechanic — July 13
Jeremy Fowler, rail service worker — July 13
Jed Ganslaw, grounds specialist — July 21
Phuoc Huynh, electro mechanic — July 31
Ruel Olanday, lead rail facilities custodian — June 29
Jeffery Wong, electro mechanic — July 22

Vehicle Maintenance

Gary Fabian, equipment service worker — July 13
William Kostelecky, equipment service worker — Aug. 24
Eugene Ulbrikson, equipment service worker — Aug. 24

In Our Thoughts

Ron Allen, mechanic (Vehicle Maintenance), passed away on Aug. 8
Carol Chapman, retired chief (Sales and Customer Services/Lost and Found), passed away on July 22

In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kc-dot/MetroTransit/InTransit

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Kudos in Transit

is described by *Bicycling Magazine* as one of the best cycling events in the nation. According to the Cascade Bicycle Club, the 2009 STP drew riders from 46 states, plus Australia, Bermuda, Canada, England, Puerto Rico, and Sweden.

(photo at right)
George Stites, #539, pedals his way to Portland in July.

